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CHARACTERISTICS

OF

MEN OF GENIUS;

A SERIES OF

Biographical, Historical, and Critical

ESSAYS,

SELECTED, BY PERMISSION,

CHIEFLY FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW.

2956

„Denn Recht hat jeder eigene Character,
Der übereinstimmt mit sich selbst, es gibt
Kein andres Unrecht, als den Widerspruch."

Schiller.

VOL. I.

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M.DCCC.XLVI.

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PREFACE.

To the majority of readers in this country, the following Essays will certainly come invested with a complete novelty, as the sources whence they have been obtained are known to very few; they will, therefore, it is believed, possess considerable interest to the English public, as samples of transatlantic literature.

In making the selection, the guiding principle has been, not so much the comparative superiority of the various articles which the North American Review contains, as their conformity and subserviency to one object, viz., that of portraying the Characteristics of Men of Genius; thus forming a collection that should be pervaded by a unity of idea, and as great a similarity in the mode of treatment and execution as is compatible with the different individualities of the writers.

It was with a view of attaining this unity, that, although it was originally intended that the volumes should be compiled exclusively from the North American Review, three Essays

have been selected from the Dial,* viz., those upon Goethe, Shelley, and Canova, which certainly increase considerably the value of the collection.

The arrangement† of the Essays into four groups has been adopted, because it seemed desirable to impart as much order as was possible to the work, consistent with its character, as it would enable the reader to form a clearer conception of the whole, and would impart to it a greater appearance of completeness. But absolute completeness, of course, is impossible in such an undertaking, inasmuch as a characterization of all those whom the world deems worthy the appellation of Genius would require a library for its fulfilment. The present volumes, therefore, can only be considered as the smallest segment of that splendid circle, whose circum-

* "The Dial: a Magazine for Literature, Philosophy, and Religion," was published quarterly, at Boston, U. S. It commenced in 1840, and was continued for four years, at the end of which it ceased for want of encouragement. It contained many able contributions, remarkable for their beauty, and the high moral and spiritual tone, not unmixed with a certain transcendental mysticism, which pervaded them. Mr. Emerson edited, I believe, the two last volumes, which are enriched with several articles and poetic effusions from his pen.

† Any classification of the small number of Essays contained in these volumes may, perhaps, appear superfluous; but as it is intended to continue the series, if possible, by characteristic delineations of other great men, it was thought desirable to institute one, and to show the grounds upon which it is based.

It is requisite to state that the responsibility of prefixing mottos to the Essays, with the exception of those upon Goethe and Canova, does not attach to the writers. This was done by the Editor, as it was thought such poetical adornment of appropriate thoughts, briefly intimating in most instances, the reciprocal appreciation of great minds, would add interest and beauty to the work.

ference is ever expanding. Any classification of Men of Genius that might be adopted, could only be an approximation to an assumed ideal of correctness; Genius, in its highest form, is many-sided, and eludes the most careful analysis; it wanders into every region of nature; is cognizant of the several departments of human knowledge, and is alike at home in every sphere of life. Hence, being the complement of mankind in life and knowledge at the time of his appearance,—the highest mark which the spring-tide of the soul has yet reached,—the man of Genius comprehends in himself, as it were, and understands the manifold forms of humanity; and there exists latent or active within him the possibility of their realization. Shakspeare, perhaps, is the only manifestation of Genius the world has witnessed of this exalted and universal order. But men of partial genius, who approach this standard in various degrees, participate of course more or less perfectly in these attributes, and hence demand our admiration in different forms. Examples are not wanting in the men whose names appear in this collection:—Dante was engaged in the fierce contests of political faction, and both he and Petrarch undertook numerous embassies; but time has determined their claims upon our homage to rest, only on the Divina Commedia of the one, and the noble sonnets of the other. Michael Angelo is celebrated as a Sculptor, Painter, and Architect; but he was at the same time, a Poet and profound Philosopher. St. Louis, King of France, was famed as a religious character and the zealous soldier of the Cross; but his impress has sunk deepest into the world's history as the unconscious opponent, and, to a great extent, destroyer of the feudal power. Pascal was

the most able mathematician and distinguished natural philosopher of his age, yet he is chiefly celebrated by posterity for his "Provincial Letters," and his fragmentary but magnificent "Thoughts."

Without more numerous instances, it will be at once seen how arbitrary any classification must be of such men;—in these volumes, therefore, the most obvious characteristic has been the determining influence. Louis the Ninth is placed among the Statesmen, though he is celebrated as a Saint; and Pascal is placed among the Ecclesiastics, though he did not actually join the Society of Port Royal, and never was a Priest.

The order of succession in which the characters appear in each group, is chronological,* and where there are contemporaries it has been fixed by the respective dates of their decease. This seemed the only practical arrangement, since the miscellaneous nature of the Essays precludes the possibility of grouping them into distinct historical or poetical epochs; and any classification according to their greatness or merit, would, if attempted, most probably result in a mere display of arbitrary preference, and want of true Universality. The order in which the four groups are placed was determined upon as being that of their development. The religious idea is ever the most primitive; it is a revelation of the innermost part of man; it springs from the profoundest depths of the soul, and all our metaphysics and philosophies are but its exponents and

* The position of the Essay upon Louis IX. is an exception to this rule, as, by an accidental inattention, it is the second instead of the first in the group of "Statesmen."

commentaries. The various forms of Art, — Music and Poetry, Painting and Sculpture,—are the celebration of its advent and presence, and draw from it the streams of inspiration wherewith are proclaimed those sublime intuitions of the manifold aspects of its truth which have ravished the souls of the great in every age. The Moralist and Statesman are the laborers in the actual and practical spheres of life; theirs is the last and outermost circle, within which the fluid truth becomes crystallized into the various forms of the social structure, and is converted into law and custom. European civilization is the consolidation of Christianity. Thus each idea, welling up from its infinite source, enriches and gladdens mankind, expanding and diffusing itself throughout life into wider and wider circles, until it reaches the outermost and lowest form of existence, which it pervades by its own nature,—imparting to each succeeding age a renewed vitality and power.*

There is a seeming inconsistency in inserting the article upon Canova, since the writer denies him the attribute of Genius; and, accepting the word in the sense in which he uses it, I should be inclined to rest in his conclusion. But the definitions of Genius are so numerous, arbitrary, and vague, that opinions would differ widely on this point. Probably it will ultimately be found that Genius varies as indefinitely in its extent and intensity, as do the different faculties with which ordinary mortals are endowed,—that it is incorrect to

* Ulrici, in his work on the Dramatic Art of Shakspeare, gives expression to the same idea when he says:—"In all cases it is necessary to begin with the consideration of the religious principle, since on it primarily depends the view which a writer entertains of life and the world."

regard it as a celestial essence vouchsafed only rarely to mankind, or that we may always predicate definitely whether a man have it or have it not; and, perhaps, the only philosophical light in which genius can be regarded, is to be obtained by designating our loftiest ideal of man by the abstract term,—Genius,—and then comparing the actual man with this standard, thereby determining the propriety of his claim to the characteristic, and its amount. The idea of *partial Genius* would thence arise; and the perception that Genius, like perfection (when applied to humanity), is a word of degrees, and only strictly applicable in this sense, would at once relieve the subject of that extraordinary arbitrariness and ambiguity in which it has so long been involved. According to this view of the subject there is no inconsistency in classing Canova among Men of Genius. If he were not a man of great originating power, he had at least a profound appreciation and critical knowledge of Art; and though his productions may embody no great idea, nor be founded in the depths of nature, yet they possess the charm of grace, and are at least veiled in beauty.

The Essay in this collection upon the Life and Writings of Machiavelli is especially valuable as contributing so ably, and on such excellent data, to rescue that great man's name from the obloquy of ages.

The impressions derived from the inspection of his portrait which may be seen at Warwick Castle, and which seems to possess the evidences of faithfulness, contrasts most strongly with the character which has so long been assigned to him throughout Europe; and it would appear that

"Time the corrector when our judgments err,"

will ultimately award to him that justice which has so long been denied him by mankind.

The sketch of Goethe's character displays great power, and has evidently been written by a man of deep earnestness and inflexible morality, whose views are eminently prospective and ideal, (though certainly influenced and colored by the institutions of his country,) and who therefore awards blame or praise, according to the degree in which the subject of criticism approaches his standard of excellence. Probably almost all that is said may be true, but it is by no means the whole truth. In fact, it seems almost impossible to do justice to Goethe. He is so great in being and culture, that so much may be predicated of him—as of nature—without violating the truth. All that is said may be conceded as indisputably, yet it does not satisfy. Acute and penetrating as the Essayist is, Goethe still demands a more Catholic treatment. It is impossible to concur with the writer that he was a man of "shallow heart," but much rather should we regard him as abounding in sensibilities so ample and acute, that he was compelled, in order to secure the supremacy of the intellect, and to attain that lofty and equable culture which he deemed all important, to shroud himself in a cold exterior. The views of Gervinus, as expressed in the Essay upon "The German Poets," will be consulted with advantage, after reading the one on Goethe. He says, "Of a delicate organization, the communion of Nature was more agreeable to Goethe than the society of men. He guarded his individuality of character from the too near approaches even of friendship and love; but nestled confidingly as a child in the kindly bosom of mother earth, and received the breath of his life from the inspiration of this great mother."

"It is true," as Mr. Emerson remarks, "though somewhat sad, that every fine genius teaches us how to blame himself. Being so much, we cannot forgive him for not being more." Yet why should we repine that Goethe chose the path of the actual, instead of the ideal; he has at least enlarged our knowledge and deepened our insight of human nature and of the world, as each generation finds it. It was from a profound conviction of its importance, that he strove to appreciate and live in the present hour. His own life and works are the exponents of that belief; by an almost unprecedented industry and universal culture, he realized his conception of the objects of existence, and thus constituted his life a magnificent poem. Example perhaps never followed so closely the footsteps of precept as in him; and, not because his aims were insignificant and low, but because his life was great and lofty:—yet we murmur that his teaching does not distance his practice more widely! He saw that for the progress of the human race, something more is needed than prophecy and song:—that after all, our sublime ideals, to avail ought in the perfectioning of mankind, must become consolidated into sublime lives; that action is greater than speech. An absolute advance of humanity and civilization can only be accomplished by transmuting great thoughts into great facts; by unfolding and enlarging our own natures, and using these new acquisitions as the successive stepping-stones of our ascent.

Viewed in this aspect,—as the apostle and exemplar of these truths,—the character of Goethe is redeemed from the censure which has been so abundantly heaped upon it, because he was not exclusively a poet of the future;—it towers

up like the granite mountain in massive and solitary grandeur, and we learn to appreciate how resolute and how mighty must have been his self-denial, to proclaim and live them, when the currents of popular poetry, feeling, and opinion, were setting in such an opposite direction.

Goethe's nature would have received more ample illustration by an essay upon his great contemporary, Schiller, placed in juxtaposition;* and moreover, an able parallel and analysis of the two, relative to their mutual affinities and differences; would possess an interest beyond themselves, inasmuch as they are the great types and representatives, in modern times, of the two widely dissimilar classes into which men of all nations and times, who have unfolded their individualities, have divided themselves; and whose tastes, objects of attraction, fundamental ideas, and philosophical views, are diametrically opposed. The one is the poet of the actual, the other of the ideal; the one contemplates and portrays Nature, — and man as a part of her; the other, the soul. The one confiding in the all-sufficiency and optimity of nature, rests calm and aimless, and in a great measure indifferent to passing events; the other, believing that the accomplishment of man's destiny may be hastened, is ever active in attempting to facilitate his progress; he is always striving to attain some seemingly important object; he is anxious, aimful, and earnest, and exalts

* This has been admirably done by Professor Gervinus in his "Neuere Geschichte der Poetischen National-Literatur der Deutschen", of which a very brief recapitulation is given in the second volume of this work, entitled, "The German Poets." The article affords but a glimpse of the mode in which the Professor causes the two poets to cast a light upon each other.

the events of the day into unwonted prëeminence, as grounds of hope or despair, according to their power of accelerating or retarding the realization of his ideal. These fundamental differences, which may be traced throughout mankind, and which elevate themselves in men of Genius of all ages to mountain-heights, originate that extraordinary diversity of opinion and judgment, which distinguishes different minds on the same subject; hence the contemplation of those characters which exhibit them in the greatest relief, teaches us to cultivate a genial and catholic spirit toward those ideas, feelings, and diverse forms of faith and action, to which we find no response in our own consciousness; and thus enables us by comparison to detect our own deficiencies, and stimulates us to supply them as far as possible by the application of an assiduous culture.

Michael Angelo is another of those many-sided men, whose characters are more fully understood by contrast and parallel with other minds in a like sphere of activity. A correct conception of the character of Raphael,—his compeer in art and greatness,—would have been a valuable aid to our power of comprehending, in all its breadth and depth, the colossal nature of Buonarotti. The two repose in majestic grandeur upon those lofty heights of art to which we look up with wonder and admiration; and a perfect appreciation of both can only be obtained by becoming acquainted with each, by transporting ourselves to their elevation, and thus making each reciprocally the point of view from which the other is regarded. They are the centres of their era; they are respectively the realization and complement of those attributes,—intellect and strength,

beauty and tenderness,—which in life need both sexes to represent them. It is, therefore, much to be regretted that an able and brief characterization of Raphael and Schiller could not be obtained to form a part of the collection, since they possess so great an intrinsic interest, and would prove the source of most instructive contemplation in instituting a parallel between them and their great contemporaries.

The Essays on Byron and Wordsworth are both by the same able hand, and have certainly been written from a lofty point of view:* they display a noble sentiment and powerful perception of the beautiful and true; and the writer does not hesitate to confess his profound admiration for the pure and truly religious poetry of Wordsworth, which for so long a time met with but a cold reception from the world; and to withdraw the veil of exterior beauty from the alluring and fascinating verse of Byron, to proclaim the vicious and demoralizing influence of its interior spirit, and to hold it up

* The article upon Wordsworth was written before that upon Byron, and it will be seen that in the opening of the former, the writer intimates his intention of completing his description and analysis of the modern imaginative literature of England, "in connexion with the individual and poetical character of its four great exponents, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Scott." In a communication from the Editor of the North American Review, I was informed that the articles upon Shelley and Scott were not likely soon to appear, and therefore their place has been supplied by other hands; though a treatment of the whole by one mind, and from the same point of view, would have possessed greater interest, as they would have been a further development and application of the just philosophical remarks upon Modern Poetry with which the essay on Wordsworth opens, and therefore would have displayed more unity and completeness. From what has been said, it will be perceived that the essay on Wordsworth should be read before that on Byron, since the former supplies in great

to the disapprobation and stern rebuke of the just and impartial judge. The delineation of his character is one of the most masterly that we have seen. Nearly all that is said is indisputably true, the censure where bestowed is always deserved, and it is hard for the intellect to put in a claim for the indulgence of mercy, when Byron is tried before the exacting tribunal of moral principle. Still the heart feels that he has a claim even here, however difficult it may be, from the waywardness and complex motives of his tangled nature, to establish it. The moral attributes were obscured, and perverted from their legitimate dominion, but they could never lose their force, in a mind so profoundly penetrated by the spirit of beauty. The "Prayer of Nature," which was written during the early part of his career, evinces the deepest moral feeling and piety of spirit; and the "Hebrew Melodies" display elevated sentiments, a faith in immortality, and an intimate acquaintance with Sacred history, to which he always recurred with pleasure, and from which he imbibed much that he has reflected in a fervid religious spirit, clothed in exquisite music. As the champion of liberty and the rights of man, Byron was ever ready to exert his unrivalled powers; and fundamentally, his sympathies were intense for suffering humanity, however misanthropic he deemed himself, or was supposed to be by those who have essayed to understand and describe him. Though

measure the principles of criticism, whereby the character and writings of each are tried. Had the author completed the group, they would of course have followed each other in the order in which they were written, but as it is, it did not seem necessary to disturb the chronological arrangement now adopted.

he was suspicious, and possessed no confidence in the men that surrounded him, yet his hope and faith in Man he never lost. His whole life was marked by kindness to his dependents, a noble generosity to all whom he was able to assist; and his magnanimous and unselfish devotion to the cause of Greece, upon which he lavished with such unsparing hand, and extraordinary self-forgetfulness, his treasure and his life, is a spectacle which claims the sympathy and admiration of every one, and is perhaps enough to atone for all the sins he committed.

In reference to the spirit and tendency of his poetry, we cannot but acquiesce in all that the essayist says, and are compelled to mourn over the self-torturing spirit and morbid subjectivity which it exhibits. That ever craving, restless, and dissatisfied spirit which expressed itself through the French Revolution, — making the whole of Europe tremble by its fearful convulsions,—seizing upon the most powerful minds of the age, and compelling them to utter its terrible inspirations,—possessed the mind of Byron; and in conjunction with the gloomy and violent passions inherited from his ancestors, waged a fierce and perpetual war with his nobler nature. Though in these conflicts his mighty soul was rent and wounded, its native splendor marred and disfigured, and the dominion of moral power overthrown, yet it was impossible to destroy, or even wholly deface, that original excellence and beauty which distinguished it, and which, in spite of all the attempts of the spoilers, beam out from his every page. Latterly the literary public has recovered from the attitude of enthusiastic admiration and blind homage which it yielded to the spirit and poetry of Byron; and in

proportion to the power of the spell by which he held it, has been its reaction to the opposite extreme. A few more oscillations, each less in degree, both of judgment and feeling, must be experienced, before his true nature, position, and merits can be accurately appreciated by the world.

In concluding these prefatory remarks, it may be as well to advert to the value of contemplating the features and actions of great men. The doctrine of hero worship as inculcated by Mr. Carlyle, and the worship of genius as hinted at by Dr. Strauss, differ in the fact, that while the one demands our reverence for the hero as an individual, and an embodiment of the all-pervading force of nature, whatever be his character; the other justifies our worship of great minds only, in so far as they represent, in a greater or less degree, the attributes of the perfect man. There is, doubtless, in each of these doctrines a profound wisdom to which mankind has long borne testimony by an instinctive and irresistible practice of their precepts, and which, when confined within determinate and appropriate limits, cannot fail to be attended with a great and beneficial influence. But the difficulty of ascertaining and defining these limits, renders them peculiarly liable to be overstepped, and then there is a danger that the profound homage which should only be yielded to infinite intelligence, will be offered to finite humanity; that the creature will be unduly exalted at the cost of losing an habitual consciousness of the omnipresent Creator. The influence of such substitution would be most injurious—it would narrow and circumscribe our contemplations; our aims would be measured by the degrees of excellence and greatness which have already been realized, instead of being directed to loftier flights by inspiration derived from medi-

tating upon the infinite ideal; and that elevated state of mind —blending dignity with humility, intellect with simplicity, the profoundest knowledge with the most child-like faith—would be beyond our reach: for it can only be attained by constantly sustaining our thoughts and feelings in an attitude of wonder and devotion upon the sublime and incomprehensible attributes of the Omnipotent God. But great men stand in other relations to humanity, in which they exercise a far more encouraging and less hazardous influence. They enlarge our idea of man, and proclaim the limitless possibilities that lie before him. His psychical nature is confessedly the same throughout all epochs, and in each individual being. Though displayed in different gradations of growth, there is in each a fundamental likeness of intelligence and feeling. Thought responds to thought, hope to hope, love to love. Being of the same flesh and blood, possessing an identity of nature with these great ones, they are at once—by their existence, the teachers of mighty truths, and the pledges of their fulfilment. Their own lives justify their doctrines. Hence they speak to us in tones of the sweetest encouragment. Their various utterances compose the splendid volume in which each may behold inscribed his own pre-conceived or latent thought. The diversity and extent of their individual attainments are so many distinct intimations of the number and greatness of man's faculties, and of the many unknown regions which he has still to explore and possess. Their effect upon us should not be to induce a blind adoration of themselves as individuals, but to awaken us from unconsciousness to consciousness, and to educe a perception of the unrecognized and immeasurable power,—of the almost boundless resources and

inexhaustible nature of the human mind; and thus by showing to us reflected, as it were, from these splendid mirrors, the grandeur and divineness of our common nature, to inspire us with a profound and permanent faith in man;—to rouse into activity the latent energies that lie folded within us; to vivify, enlarge, and elevate the belief in the glorious destiny that awaits us, and beckons us unceasingly onward for its accomplishment.

An important element in modern civilization is the system of division and subdivision of labor; and doubtless the rapid elevation which that civilization has reached, the splendor, wealth, luxuriance, and innumerable philosophical and mechanical triumphs which it boasts, are in a great measure attributable to the application of this system. But this mighty display has been purchased at an enormous cost,—perhaps too dearly; in casting up the nett value of it all, we are apt to leave out of the account the amount of human life expended in its creation, and to complacently congratulate ourselves merely as the possessors and representatives of this great result. We estimate the action more highly than the actor, we think more of doing than of being,—of the mansion than the builder,—of civilization than the citizen; and therefore value each individual in proportion to his capability of contributing, to the already vast accumulation, his isolated products; instead of regarding society with all its riches as the minister of his needs, and the sphere of activity for the exercise of his various faculties, and the development of his nature.

Proceeding in this spirit, society has imposed upon its members a countless diversity of employments, so subdivided

and simple, that the action needed for the performance of each is so monotonous, wearying, and purely mechanical, conjoined with the large proportion of time necessarily spent in such occupations, that instead of tending to unfold the faculties and stimulate the growth of the worker, it deadens the feelings, renders obtuse the perceptions, narrows and stupefies the intellectual powers, and frequently inflicts permanent injury upon the physical frame. It is the same in every department of industry, but more particularly in the wonderful factories, of which England is proud, and the products of which have contributed so largely to her extraordinary wealth and greatness. The same principle pervades society from the lowest to the highest classes; science, philosophy, and even religion are subject to its sway; every distinguished man, with a few rare exceptions, is sacrificed at its shrine. The fabric of modern civilization consists of an infinite number of parts, differing in shape and size, held together by a cunning dovetailing of each with each, and thus creating a whole by mechanical conjunction; instead of being an aggregate of independent and individually perfect atoms, constituting a whole by the attraction of gravitation. This wonderful structure, merging the individual in the mass, is justified by its results, as having realized a far greater general progress than could have been attained in the same time, by a system which should attempt an universal culture and development of each individual. If society be considered in reference to its products, without regard to the welfare and destiny of its members, this is possibly true; but if the culture and expansion of man's individual nature is the great aim which our institutions should strive to achieve,—

then it will be seen how illusive and apparent only is our progress. It is probable that a more enlarged view would show us, that even the advancement of science, inventions, and the practical application of these—manufactures, would not be retarded in the long run,—say a cycle of centuries,—by a careful and general unfolding of each individual. The slow progress made in the beginning would be compensated for by the rapidity which would be subsequently acquired.

A perfect knowledge of each component part is only to be gathered by a knowledge of the whole, in the same way that a perfect knowledge of the whole supposes a knowledge of the parts. Analytical must precede a true synthetical philosophy, though a general comprehension of the latter is necessary to render an accurate system of the former possible; the one presupposes and necessitates the other; action and reaction is the soul of progress. As in the growth of the individual when truly educated, there are alternations of investigation and generalization, so in the ages it may be, Providence has ordained that there should be successively analytical and synthetical cycles. If this be true, ours is assuredly far advanced in its progress through the former period. We are analysts *par excellence*. It is an age of science, not of wisdom; of bold inquiry, daring curiosity, division, decomposition, dissolution, destruction;—radicalism, doubt, and unbelief: everything must be demonstrated. Faith has lost her power, and her serene and confiding features are only beheld with philosophical indifference or contemptuous scorn. Even men of genius are not exempt from the influences of the epoch. Excepting Shakspeare and Goethe, they are exclusive and partial. They are magnificent fragments of

the ideal man. Nevertheless, while we yield them our reverence, and meditate upon their greatness, they cannot fail to inspire and stimulate us by their glorious examples; and perhaps the most important lessons which they teach us, they will only impart when we contemplate them as so many splendid and lofty columns, now standing alone in solitary grandeur, but suggestive of the perfect temple in which each shall be combined, and whose grandeur and beauty shall transcend that of any structure which the world has seen. They will thus point to an age of sages, of enlarged wisdom, and universal culture; of men who shall gather up the discoveries and results of preceding centuries, assign to them their relative worth in the vast circle of science, collect and converge the light reflected from them in so many colored rays, which, when again blended, shall display that pure knowledge and universal truth, for the possession of which humanity never ceases to labor.

JOHN CHAPMAN.

LONDON, 121, NEWGATE STREET,
November 16, 1846.

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ECCLESIASTICS.

"—But let us look more narrowly at the position and past efforts of the Church; for in truth its history is the history of Europe from the fourth to the fifteenth century."—*Essay on Gregory VII.*, page 7.

"No thought that ever dwelt honestly as true in the heart of man, but *was* an honest insight into God's truth on man's part, and has an essential truth in it which endures through all changes, an everlasting possession for us all. * * * * Whole ages, what we call ages of Faith, are original,—all men in them, or the most of men in them, sincere. These are the great and fruitful ages: every worker in all spheres, is a worker not on semblance but on substance; every work issues in a result; the general sum of such work is great; for all of it as genuine, tends towards one goal.—THOMAS CARLYLE.

GREGORY THE SEVENTH,

AND HIS AGE.*

SURELY it is a good sign for our age that we have such historians as Hallam, Ranke, Hurter, and Voigt,—men who can see truth and excellence out of their own peculiar range of association, their own school of truth and excellence. And surely it is a good sign for Protestantism, which has ever tended so much to worship that intolerance which is the Antichrist of her faith, that such historians are rising among her sons; men who can see good as well as evil in the Western Christendom of the Middle Ages, and who dare show to their contemporaries that the spirit of wisdom and reformation was not reserved for our perfect days alone;—and yet who are not Puseyites or Patristics of any school, but earnest, free-spoken Lutherans. And among these writers, there is no one who has given himself to an age more worthy of thorough and careful examination than the one selected by Voigt. It was the age of Hildebrand, of William the Norman, of the white-haired, firm-hearted, well-taught Lanfranc; of Abelard, and Bernard of Clairvaux, and the wise Mussul-

* *Histoire du Pape Grégoire VII., et de son Siècle, d'après les Monuments Originaux.* Par J. VOIGT, Professeur à l'Université de Halle. Traduite de l'Allemand, par M. L'ABBE JAGER. Paris: A. Laton, Libraire-Editeur. 1838. 2 Tomes. 8vo.

mans of Spain; the age of rising cities, of consolidating feudalism, of literature beginning to breathe, of democracy struggling to be born.

Since Christianity came to man, but one great element has been introduced into European life; this was the intermingling of the Northern barbarians with the civilized, Christianized, degraded Romans of the South; the marriage of the fair-haired Teuton with his half-enslaved brunette bride. And a fierce wedding it was,—a dance of torches and of swords. For five hundred years, Frank crowded on Burgundian and Visigoth; farther Frank on nearer; Saxon on the farthest Frank; Slave and Hun on him; all was bloodshed, license, licentiousness, turmoil, robbery, and woe. A prayer for aid, a cry as of millions in mortal agony, rose unceasingly toward heaven. The ploughman stood idle, with hopeless, downcast eye; the hammer of the blacksmith hung in mid-air, as he thought how fruitless was his labour; the merchant stole along the hedges, shrinking from the eye of the passer, and stepped into rivers cautiously, seeking a ford, lest the man at the bridge should rob him. Over all the West of Europe, the wassail-song of the baron, the mocking laugh of the bandit, the shriek of the virgin, the nasal twang of priestly insult to God, were the only sounds which rose above the chaos of inarticulate moaning and heartfelt prayer, that came from the half-cultured country and half-deserted town. For a time, the reign of Charlemagne acted like oil upon the waters; but the day which God gave him passed by, and all was storm again; he came as a sunbeam in a dark day, as a meteor in the tempest, dazzling and wonderful, but shedding no permanent, abiding light. Into the darkness of that tempest let us cast a glance, and try to see a clear outline or two in its great depths.

It is a law of God, that a new organization shall always be preceded by the entire dissolution of what has gone before. The mineral will crystallize anew, only after it has been

completely dissolved; the vegetable and the animal must be decomposed, before their elements can recombine into other forms of life. So, too, a new society can arise, only when the old one has been wholly dissolved, its atoms freed from each other, and its old arrangements broken up; so that every particle is at liberty to become part of the new living frame, according to some other law than that which governed the formation of the old social unit. The Roman world had to be ground down and dissolved by barbarian and Christian influences, before the formation of modern society became possible. Whose eyes can watch these processes, through the dust and fumes which rise from them? From Clovis to Hugh Capet, the grinding and fermenting cease not; and it is only within the eleventh century, when every baron, in his stone nest upon the hill-top, rejoices in utter independence of law and government, that we see the freed molecules of society ready to combine anew; while within the same age, in the completed feudalism of France, the rising power of the Church, the birth of the Communes, and the song of the Troubadour, are discernible the first floating filaments of the world in which we live. When the decomposing process was completed, society may be said to have ceased; while each family and individual, passing also through a modified chaos, acquired new ideas and tended to new organizations. To use the language of electrology, each atom acquired a new polarization. Chivalry, female influence, loyalty, romantic devotion were then born within each separate household. Virtues, which had been unknown to Roman, German, or Christian, sprang into being from the commingling of all these elements.

Would we see a man of those times, of the first half of the eleventh century,—barbarian-Christian, chaotic and contradictory? Let us take the following portrait, sketched by William of Malmesbury. Old Foulques Nerra, Count of Anjou, having for many long years governed his county with

glory, and, one act excepted, with honour, at length gave the active administration into the hands of his son, Geoffrey Martel, a haughty, quarrelsome young fellow, who not content with the substance, would have the insignia of power, and took up arms against his father to gain them. The old man, who, in leaving the battle-field and council-court, had proposed to attend mainly to the welfare of his soul, no sooner heard of his son's disloyalty than he grew young again with anger. "Once more to horse!" cried the graybeard; "up, every true man of you! The world will go to ruin at this rate! The saints shudder in their tombs at such impiety! Let every father and true son aid me!" They came at his call, and, led to battle by the fiery old warrior, overthrew the usurper and made him prisoner. What shall be done with such an enemy to society? The wrinkled brow of the father lost not its frown, and the proud boy was sentenced to the most humiliating punishment. On his hands and knees, a saddle upon his back, he was forced to crawl for miles to the feet of his father, who sat, trembling with excitement, waiting his arrival. He came in sight, he reached his parent's feet; did that paternal heart melt? Springing up, while the young man was still prostrate, again and again he kicked him, as he cried, "Are you conquered? are you conquered, boy?" The proud youth answered, "Yes, by you, my father; none else can conquer me." The flush of anger in the withered cheek died away; the bloodshot eye filled; those words, full of his own soul, reached his heart; lifting his son from the ground, he threw his arms about him, bade him forget the insult he had received, restored him his command, and forgot the past.

Is this not enough? Look, then, at this same old Foulques Nerra, journeying with two sworn servants to Jerusalem. See him, half stripped, kneeling before the Holy Sepulchre; a wooden yoke is on his neck, and, as the servants scourge him under the eyes of wondering Mussul-

mans, hear his piercing prayer,—"Receive, dear Lord, this perjured, but repentant soul! Deign, O holy Jesus, to take me to thyself!" His prayer was not granted; three times he visited the Holy Land, and died at last in Europe engaged in war with the son he had forgiven, because he disapproved of his marriage.

Let us look at that son's emplóyments, as recorded by another Foulques, Fulk, or Fulco, his nephew.

"By and by Geoffrey had a war with William of Normandy, who afterwards took England, and was a great king. Then he had one with the French, and the people of Berry; one with William, Count of Poictiers; one with Emery, Viscount of Thouars; one with Hoel, Count of Nantes, and the other Breton counts who held the city of Rennes; and then one with Hugh, Count of Maine, who had failed in his fidelity to him. It was because of these wars, and the magnanimity he showed in them, that he was called the 'Hammer' (*Martel*), as being one who hammered well his enemies."

The nephew, who leaves us the memoirs from which this extract is taken, spent the eight years next after his uncle's death, he tells us, in warfare with his brother, "with now and then a truce," trying to settle the division of the domains left them. This record of constant warfare will explain the necessity which existed for the adoption of the "Truce of God," the work of the Church; the history of which we may with propriety sketch, as it was one of the most characteristic features of the times we treat of.

In the year 994, a fearful pestilence raged in the south-west of France. The people, horror-stricken, crowded for safety to the churches where lay the wonder-working relics of the saints; and above all, to the church of St. Martial at Limoges. Thither they flocked, though all around was disease, and death, and pollution. The flesh of the infected fell from their bones; the air reeked with the vapours of decay; day and night, groans and cries of anguish mingled with the unceasing prayers of all the bishops of Aquitaine,

who officiated before the altar. The hand of God was seen in the affliction; conscience spoke to the hardened sinners who witnessed these scenes of terror; and princes and barons bound themselves, trembling, to cease their wars and robberies, and to practise peace and justice. But soon impunity made them forget their oath; and again, on every hand, violence and evil reigned unchecked. At length, in 1033, the angel of death once more descended, and in a form more terrible than pestilence. A famine fell upon the land, which carried agony to every hearth; all animals, all roots and grass, were exhausted, and then, as in shipwrecked vessels and besieged towns, man turned on man. The last apple that was left was used to decoy some child to death, that the decoyer might feast upon it. Men became wolves; and the wolves, starving too, broke from the mountains to aid in the warfare upon human kind. Again God's hand was recognized; and when the Church raised her voice, and said that men suffered thus because of the evil that was done, all, gentle and simple, for the moment bowed; and established "God's Peace."

But it was again for the time only; human nature could not yet bear total abstinence from human blood, and within a few years, "God's *Truce*" was substituted in place of "God's *Peace*." By this truce, which was nominally established through nearly all Europe, warfare, plunder, and bloodshed were forbidden from sunset on Wednesday to sunrise on Monday; also during the great festivals; and during the Christmas holydays and Lent, no new defences were to be erected, nor old ones repaired. But this was not all. The provisions made for the protection of the labourer, and for the produce of labour, were far more characteristic of the dawning of a new era,—the era of church power, and of the arts of peace. Peasants in hostile territories were not to be injured or confined; the tools of agriculture, the hay and grain stacks, the cattle, were all taken under the protection of the Church; if seized, it must be for use, not destruction.

He that violated this truce was placed under censure of the ecclesiastical power.

This was about the year 1041, in the pontificate of the wretched Benedict the Ninth, when pilgrims dared not enter Rome for fear of robbery, and just before the great quarrel, when the rivalry of three claimants to St. Peter's chair obliged Henry of Germany to interfere. It was not then the Roman Church which strove to civilize Europe through the "Truce of God," but the bishops of Spain and France. The Church, indeed, as yet was not a hierarchy, but rather an aristocracy. But let us look more narrowly at the position and past efforts of the Church; for, in truth, its history is the history of Europe from the fourth to the fifteenth century.

In the last days of the Empire, the only active, energetic officers were those of the great Catholic body. When the barbarians came, the bishops met and tamed them. They became in part barbarous, in order to make the Franks and Lombards in part Christian. Thus were impurity and worldliness carried into the Church. When the Roman ideas died with Charlemagne, and individualism destroyed all political unity, the unity of the Church, in part at least, was lost too. Then the worldly tendency increased, and men, devoid of all learning and spiritual graces, sought to profit by the Church revenues, either directly or indirectly,—by becoming bishops and abbots, or by selling those places to others equally worthless. As the feudal relation spread in reference to all else, it seized upon the Church, and subordinated it to the power and pleasure of the suzerain. Still, though seemingly enslaved, the Church was in reality the life of Europe, the one feeble bond which upheld society. She was the refuge of the distressed, the friend of the slave, the helper of the injured, the only hope of learning. To her chivalry owed its noble aspirations; to her art and agriculture looked for every improvement. The ruler from her learned some rude justice; the ruled learned faith and obedience.

Let us not cling to the superstition which teaches that the Church has always upheld the cause of tyrants. Through the Middle Ages she was the only friend and advocate of the people, and of the rights of man. To her influence was it owing, that, through all that strange era, the slaves of Europe were better protected by law than are now the free blacks of our United States by the national statutes.

The Church history of the tenth and eleventh centuries especially is an epitome of the history of Europe. While it was all that we have described, it was, at the same time, filled with the records of rapine, lust, ambition, and evil. Cautiously, but widely, the effort was commencing on the part of ecclesiastics to govern the nobles by means of mingled argument and artifice. Of this effort we have some curious evidences in the earlier history of that same old Foulques who saddled his rebel son. It was then, also, that the wonderful stories of the fate of those who took Church property had their rise; for example, that of the knight who, having made free with the property of St. Clement, was attacked by rats. All day he fought against them, sword in hand; but it was useless to slay them, for new crowds constantly came. At length, when evening drew near, the poor wearied knight was forced to have himself hung up in a cage, suspended from the wall, thinking he was there safe from his enemies. But he mistook. When his attendants in the morning opened the cage to congratulate him on the disappearance of his foes, they found only his well-picked bones.

But while more of policy begins to appear in the Church during the first half of the eleventh century, there were yet crowds of churchmen who bore the broad stamp of barbarism. We may refer, as an illustration, to the case of the Abbot of Fulda and the Bishop of Hildesheim, as late as 1063. They contended for precedence; and the bishop, upon a certain occasion, anticipating trouble, concealed a body of soldiers in the church where the quarrel was likely

to break out. These men, when it did break out, fell upon the unarmed followers of the abbot, and began a slaughter. The friends of the Fulda cause rushed in then, sword in hand, and the church was a battle-field. Standing on high, the bishop cheered on his men, bidding them forget the place and its character; and by his energy he carried the day. And this was done by churchmen, not only in the house of God, but also in the presence of their young monarch, Henry the Fourth of Germany. The abbot was heavily fined. To raise the money, he used the property of his convent unjustly, and starved his monks. The monks rebelled, the abbot was forced to fly. The monks pursued him to the king's feet; but Henry took his part, and the rebels were brought to reason by a detachment of soldiers.

A better idea, however, of the chaotic character of the age may be formed by observing the conduct of two of the chief prelates of the Empire, the Archbishops of Cologne and Bremen. The young king was under the care of his mother, Agnes, whose chief counsellor was the Bishop of Augsburg. The two archbishops, together with him of Mayence, were determined to get the boy into their hands by any means. The Archbishop of Cologne, accordingly, in 1062, contrived to meet Henry on an island in the Rhine, where the young monarch was feasting. One day the prelate told the prince, as he walked with him, that there was a most beautiful bark at the shore, which he had caused to be built. This was the fact; he had prepared it for the occasion, adorned it with tapestry, gilding, carved work, and painting. So eloquent was the account he gave of it, that Henry was readily persuaded to go on board. Instantly, on a signal, hidden rowers swept the vessel from the shore. The despairing Henry cast himself into the Rhine, but was saved and brought on board again; and, followed by the curses and threats of the party of the queen-mother, the reverend robber bore away his prey to Cologne.

But Anno of Cologne was far inferior to his associate, Adalbert of Bremen. Nobly born, well educated, with a fine person, a strong mind, an unbending will, and boundless ambition, Adalbert came into the world a predestined ruler. Determined to obtain control of the young Henry, and to extend his own wealth and power until he should be the Pope of the North, he gave the reign to the prince's passions, and stopped not either for truth, justice, or mercy. Engaged in wars and spoliations which loosened all moral control throughout Germany, he still ruled monarch and people until 1067, when the nobles of the Empire plainly told Henry that he must leave Adalbert, or abandon all claim to the throne. Then for a season he left the court, but soon returning, remained in power till his death in 1072.

Into such a world of fierce barons and scarcely less fierce churchmen—a world which to those of its own day seemed so bad that they thought it must soon end—was born the boy Hildebrand, at Soano, in Tuscany. The year of his birth is not known. His father, an honest carpenter, saw the lad's parts, and gave him the best education that could be had; his master was John Gratian, afterwards Gregory the Sixth, one of the three popes deposed by Henry the Third in 1046. At some unknown period Hildebrand crossed the Alps, and became an inmate of the monastery of Cluny, near Macon, in France. In this celebrated house, surrounded by highly cultivated gardens, the young man's mind and soul were watched over by the fathers of the institution, who understood his capacity, and expected great things of his future career. No less was thought of him at the court of Germany, whither he went at a later period. The reigning emperor, Henry the Third, said that he preached God's word with more power than any one he had ever heard. But a court was not the place for Hildebrand, and he soon reached his true position as Prior of Cluny. In this part of his life the dates are so uncertain and tangled, that we will not undertake to say any

thing about them; the first sure point, chronologically, that we meet with in his life, being his entrance into Italy in 1048-9, with Bruno, who had been appointed pope.

Before that time, however, the vast plans to which Hildebrand devoted his after life were formed. In those gardens of Cluny he sat in thoughtful solitude, meditating on the chaotic world about him, and praying for God's spirit to move upon the face of the waters. Can we enter into his thoughts? Can we see the evil and the remedy as he saw them? If we can, we find the key to his life, and to the history of Christendom.

From the shades of his mountain-cinctured retreat, Hildebrand looked out upon a world filled with ignorance, violence, and evil; upon a world, wherein God's image was effaced from man's soul. The old divisions between Roman and German had melted away, and the people and their language were new and shapeless. Order or supremacy there was none, or but the faintest signs of them. In every land he saw the same scene; everywhere the material of society, but no hand busy in the manufacture. And what hand ought to reform and create anew the moral world, but that which formed the earth and the sun? And would he not do it? Could it be God's will that men should groan in the agony of that day for ever? Surely he would change the whole structure of society, and make justice and peace once more known among men. And how? How, unless through his Church? But had not the Church always laboured against these evils and iniquities? Why was she so weak?—In silent, solitary meditation, Hildebrand weighed all these points; and as he thought, saying nothing, listening to every thing, the problems one by one were solved by the mysterious power which works in earnest meditation. He saw that the Church, to do God's will, must become far more efficiently one; must lose its independent, feudal, aristocratic character, and assume the form, substance, and strength of

a despotism,—whose head should be Rome, whose agent should be the successor of St. Peter. But that, though much, would be as nothing, unless the Church were independent of the nobles, of the emperor, and of all the world. Not only the Church must be independent, but, above all, the Pope must be so. Even if all were as he wished in respect to the independence of the Church, would the wild, proud, fearless, feudal nobles obey the advice of God's representative on earth? Must not that representative be prepared to order and enforce obedience, as well as to advise? And how could this be done with power and effect,—how could God's aid be looked for,—unless the Church were pure, as well as independent and united? Thus there rose up in the mind of the solitary thinker in those Cluny arbours four great guiding ideas; that God's Church should be one, and Rome its efficient head; that it should be free; that it should be pure; that it should assume the tone due to it as God's inspired organ, and command the princes and powers of the earth.

Calmly impatient, Hildebrand sat revolving his great plans, and biding his time. He opened his plans to the abbot in part, and with care. The good abbot saw the evil, and trusted that God would terminate it; he knew the Church ought to be free, and prayed that it might become so; but in the great work what could they do? Pray; trust in God; live pure, and hope for the best. And truly, such a world-making as the Prior of Cluny dreamed of was no slight task. To free the bishop from the baron, and the pope from the emperor; to stop all simony, and all priest-marriages; to unite the ecclesiastics of Europe under one despotic head, and make monarchs and warriors bow to that sacred power:—would not most abbots and men have said, "Pray and hope for the best, for what can we do?" Not so thought Hildebrand; to him it was clear that the work might and must be done. It would take scores of years, perhaps centuries; his

dust would return to the earth long before the Herculean task could be accomplished. But what then? It did not follow that he must die before it was *begun*.

And now, in 1048, for the third time, messengers from Rome sought the emperor to ask from him a holy pontiff. At a full synod at Worms, the excellent Bruno was unanimously agreed on, as the most worthy and fit for the chair of the Apostle. Pious, learned, pure, and mild, Henry and his counsellors thought he could reform the Church, and yet not take airs upon himself; could be made to work as they pleased, to reform up to their point. The choice was made known to him, the place accepted; and, as Leo the Ninth, he left Worms, and, by easy journeys through the Vosges, reached Toul, of which he had been, and still remained, bishop; and then, in full pontificals, admired by all men, passed on his southward way toward Rome. It was Christmas day when he drew near to the far-famed monastery of Cluny; whose abbot and prior hastened out to meet the great Christian father, and to invite him to spend with them the great festival of the Church.

In prayer and sober rejoicing they commemorated the coming of their Saviour. In friendly conversation they brought before them the world, the Church, the infinite evils of Christendom. Did Jesus then come in vain? Did Peter found his Holy See in vain? Had God deserted that Church with which he promised to be while the world stood? God had not deserted it; it needed an effort on man's part; it needed faith in Christ and Christian principle; it needed self-sacrifice and courage on the part of God's representative among the nations. The excellent Bruno felt and acknowledged his duties and his difficulties; he had been chosen by the emperor, who wished truly to aid in reforming the Church, and he was bound in gratitude and honour to consult that emperor's wishes. And these wishes might clash with the true interests of Christ's people: how melancholy that the

head of Christendom could not be truly and in power its head! "There was a time," said Hildebrand, "when these things were not so; when the Bishop of Rome was chosen by the people and clergy of Rome, and stood as free of the emperor as of the Caliph of Bagdad." "There was," answered the mild father of the Church; "but alas! it can never be again!" "Can it not be?" asked the Prior, earnestly; "is your Holiness sure it can never be? May not God be waiting even now for you to take the first step in a revolution which shall not merely reform, but recreate his Church? O most venerated Father, has not Christ called you that you may serve him, and not an earthly potentate? He, by his appointed means, will make you head of his Church, but no emperor can do so. These robes, pardon me for my boldness, are not truly the insignia of Peter's successor; for never did Peter, or his Master, give to earthly monarch the power to choose the Shepherd of the world." Bruno listened; his soul kindled at the words of the bold prior; he saw history by a new light, saw duty by a new light, and was shaken as from a sleep of years.

The Christmas revels were over. The report went forth that the pope would resume his journey toward Rome. The villagers flocked forth to see the show; the house-tops, even in that cold season, were covered with anxious spectators; the Rhone, far eastward, swarmed with barges; nobles in mail-coats, bishops in rich robes sweeping the earth, ladies in jewelry and gold,—all came to see the newly-chosen head of Christendom. The monastery gates unclosed; all eyes strained to catch a glimpse; Leo came forth,—but no longer in the robes of a pontiff, with the pomp of a prince; in pilgrim weeds, and with a pilgrim's staff to support his steps, Bruno, Bishop of Toul, was on his way to ask of the Roman people and clergy confirmation of the otherwise empty imperial nomination. How noble looked at priest, and priest at peasant, and women's tongues were silent from

wonder, and all the world seemed astonished for a moment, is nowhere recorded, but is easily imagined. And who walked by Bruno's side? The Prior of Cluny, henceforth manager of popes, and recreator of Europe. The Herculean task was visibly begun, and a demonstration given that something might be done by man beside praying and hoping for the best.

The strange procession reached the Eternal City; barefooted, Bruno walked the streets, and asked confirmation of the emperor's choice. It was given with full hearts and eyes. On the 2nd of February, 1049, he was consecrated. Thus had Hildebrand entered his wedge; he had made his protest against the imperial appointment to St. Peter's chair; he was next to open his church batteries against the other great evils of the day. In the same year, therefore, in which he was consecrated, Bruno held at Rheims a council, wherein simony, the dependence of priests on laymen, the unlawful marriages of priests, their more unlawful custom of concubinage, their yet viler crimes,—their habits of violence, of warfare, of robbery, of injustice,—were all condemned. The Church must civilize Europe, and it must first purify itself. In twelve canons we have Hildebrand's protest against the iniquities of churchmen.

But a mere verbal protest, though very needful, was not all; an example was wanted. When Leo had made known to the king of France, that he proposed to hold a council at Rheims to look into the matter of simony, efforts were made to prevent the visit; but they were made in vain. Even if Bruno would have listened to requests evidently made by fearful and guilty men, his sub-deacon, Hildebrand, would hear no such prayers. And good cause had the guilty to fear; one by one, archbishop, bishop, and abbot,—all the prelates,—were called up to state under oath whether they had ever, directly or indirectly, been guilty of simony. Two archbishops, six bishops, and one abbot could not

swear that they were innocent; six of the nine were deposed.

And now, notice having been given to the emperor and the world that the imperial nomination of the head of Christendom was nothing, unless confirmed, according to old usage, by the Romans; and the priesthood having been roused to the danger of buying and selling church dignities, Hildebrand, as soon as temporal matters would allow, turned Leo's mind to the final adjustment of the old quarrel with the patriarch of Constantinople. Rome, by distinct acts, must avow herself sole head of the Church. Accordingly, toward the close of 1053, legates from Rome presented themselves before the proud ruler of the Eastern Church, Michael Cerularius, and demanded the recognition of Rome's claim to be the only orthodox and supreme spiritual power on earth. Michael refused the recognition. Turmoil and threatened violence ensued. Rome would abate no jot of her claim, and her pride was met by equal pride. Her messengers then raised their voice, and in the church of St. Sophia excommunicated the patriarch and all who adhered to him; they placed a copy of their anathemas upon the high altar of the church, shook the dust from their feet, and returned to render an account of their doings. But he to whom they should have accounted, the good Bruno, had fallen asleep in the month of May, 1054; and Hildebrand was even then seeking for his successor.

In this search he had a delicate part to play; his problem was to prevent the emperor from nominating the pope, and yet not to offend the emperor. Historians differ as to the mode which he adopted, but there seems to be no doubt as to his success. He chose his man, Gebhard; compelled the emperor to nominate him, and then had the election made, as in Leo's case, at Rome. Thus, again, he openly protested against the imperial appointment as conclusive, while, at the same time, he managed not to break with the wise monarch

of Germany. Gebhard, as Victor the Second, went back with Hildebrand to the Holy City. Victor lived but two years, but during those years the great plans of the subdeacon went steadily forward. In two matters especially did he gain strength and success. The one was in the result of his mission to France to repress simony; he induced seventy-two bishops and dignitaries of the Church to confess their guilt and abdicate their places! It is said that he brought about this result by miraculous means; for that, when the first one accused presented himself boldly, and defied inquiry, having previously bribed the witnesses, Hildebrand asked him to say, "Glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;" and the false prelate, finding himself unable to pronounce the words "Holy Ghost," fell on his knees and confessed his bribery and his falsehood.

But without stopping to discuss this story, let us look at the other case of success, in which our world-changer laid the foundation for the supremacy of the Roman Church over kings and emperors. Thus far he had striven to free the pope from imperial power; to free the Church from baronial vendors; to purify the priesthood, and assert Rome's supremacy. The year 1055 witnessed the first step taken in the most difficult labour he had yet to perform,—the subordination of temporal to spiritual power. The circumstances were these. Ferdinand of Castile had refused to pay due homage to the emperor, and had hinted an intention of assuming that title for himself. This matter was laid before one of the synods held by Hildebrand, who agreed that the conduct of the Spanish prince was a wrong done to the imperial dignity, and through it to all Europe; but at the same time he contended, that it was easier and better to settle all such matters peaceably, and offered the intervention of the power of the pope. Henry, seeing little of the future, agreed to employ the Church to bring the rebel to his senses. Accordingly legates set out for Spain, bearing the recognition by

the ecclesiastical power of the wrong done to the emperor, and calling upon the usurper to return to his duty, and renounce all claim to the imperial title, under pain of excommunication. Ferdinand called together and consulted his own great prelates, and finding their voice to be in favour of submission to Rome, he announced to the messengers his willingness to obey the papal command. By this action, the Spanish bishops definitely admitted the idea of unity in the Church, and of Roman supremacy; while Henry and Ferdinand united to teach the princes of Europe that the imperial dignity, the highest known in the West, was in some sense dependent upon the successor of St. Peter. Thus had Hildebrand, within seven years, promulgated widely the four great leading ideas which had risen before his mind in those Cluny arbours.

Victor died; to him succeeded Stephen the Ninth, who reigned only seven months. His view of the monk of Cluny may be gathered from his last words: "Make no choice of my successor," said he, "till Hildebrand returns." The sub-deacon was then absent in Germany, whose emperor was dead, and whose young prince was in the hands of his mother, Agnes. Before his return, however, by means of bribery, the Bishop of Velletri, under the title of Benedict the Tenth, ascended the papal throne. What course, then, was the reformer to pursue, since corruption had thus again dared to lay hands on the Holy See itself? His partisans were driven from Rome, where Benedict, supported by the nobles, ruled supreme. If he turned to the empress, he lost all he had gained toward insuring the pope's independence of the imperial power. The clergy of the north of Italy were opposed to him, because he had caused Stephen to war against their continued habit of marriage. Whither should he turn? Leaving Germany, with the consent of the empress, he called a council in Tuscany, having already fixed in his own mind on Gerard, Bishop of Florence, as

Stephen's successor. At this council, he first caused Benedict to be excommunicated, and next caused the nomination of Gerard to be made. At the same time, before the council had named any one to the vacant pontificate, he had sent messengers to the young German prince, expressing the wish of the Romans that he and his advisers should name whom they thought most fit, but recommending, in a way which Agnes understood, the Bishop of Florence; who thus, by virtue both of the imperial nomination, backed by imperial lances, and of the choice of a proper council, could lay claim to the tiara. Early in 1059, under the title of Nicholas the Second, Gerard entered Rome, while Benedict was forced to retire, crestfallen and powerless, a deposed usurper, to Velletri.

The crisis which had just passed, we may be assured, had been foreseen by Hildebrand. He knew the history of the previous century too well not to perceive from the outset, that it was as needful to set the pope free from the Roman nobles as from the German monarch. It was with pleasure therefore, in all probability, that he regarded the futile attempt of the factious aristocracy of the Eternal City to oppose the spiritual power; for it would, of course, afford an excellent opportunity to place the election of pope beyond their control, in part at least, if not entirely. No sooner, therefore, was Nicholas fairly seated, than a council of one hundred and thirteen bishops met at the Lateran, chiefly to consider the momentous subject of papal elections. By them it was determined, that wisdom would not teach an entire and immediate abrogation of the share either of the nobles or the emperor in the choice of the Roman bishop; but that the difficult matter should be arranged thus. On the death of a pope the cardinal bishops—that is, the seven bishops within the Roman territory—were to meet and consider who should succeed him. They should then call in the cardinal clerks, or twenty-eight presbyters of the chief

Roman churches; and by these thirty-five, forming the College of Cardinals, the election was to be made, subject, however, to the agreement of the rest of the Roman clergy and the people of Rome, and impliedly to the consent of the emperor; the emperor's voice in the matter being a personal right, which the Church might withhold from any one it pleased. Thus was arranged a system which, almost of necessity, would result in the complete supremacy of the College of Cardinals, and which, in fact, did so in the year 1179. It secured perfectly Hildebrand's first object, the independence of the papal power.

This independence was not to be left without substantial support. We have not time to enter into the details of the Norman invasion of Italy; it will be enough for our purpose to remind our readers, that, when those wild, gallant pirates conquered the whole south of the beautiful peninsula, and defeated and took prisoner the good old Bruno, in 1053, they bowed before him and asked his pardon, and bound themselves to be his vassals. The relation then established between Rome and the Normans of Italy was made yet stronger in 1059, when, by the influence of our pope-guiding sub-deacon, Robert Guiscard became the soldier of the Church, and bound himself to fight her battles; thus insuring the independence of the Roman bishop by the aid of the best lances of the South. Nor was it by the wild Normans alone that the Holy See was defended. Beatrice, wife of Godfrey of Lorraine, and mother of the celebrated Countess Matilda, was also ready to throw her power, as Marchioness of Tuscany, in favour of the Roman pontiffs, and with men and arms to aid them. And well was it for Hildebrand that he had secured these stout defenders, for now the time drew near that was to make or mar his plans for ever.

In 1061, Nicholas the Second died, and the canons respecting the mode of choosing his successor were to be enforced, in opposition, probably, to the nobles of Rome, and to the

empress of Germany. The cardinals met, and nominated Anselm of Lucca, who was chosen under the name of Alexander the Second. It was supposed that his great merits, his piety, goodness, and learning would cause all parties joyfully to agree in the election, if agreement in any case was possible. But such was not the case; a faction arose, opposed to the action of the cardinals; messengers were sent to the empress; the Lombard bishops, always hostile to the wife-banishing Hildebrand, crowded to Basle; the canons of Nicholas the Second relative to the choice of pope were condemned and disavowed; and soon the Bishop of Parma, as Honorius the Second, was declared the true successor of St. Peter. It was the crisis of the plans of our monk of Cluny. Should the licentious and mercenary priests of Lombardy succeed, simony and concubinage would again be the order of things, and the power of the Church be lost, perhaps for ever. The pope's chancellor, for such had Hildebrand become, girded up his loins for the struggle; Heaven would not desert him. The profane anti-pope, Honorius, commenced his march on Rome; many hands there beckoned him forward; behind was the power of the Empire. Still Hildebrand said, "Heaven will not desert us;" and through the south of Europe, earthquakes, lightning in mid-winter, fearful tempests, and fatal diseases announced to all that Heaven was not unmindful of the doings upon earth. On the 14th of April, 1062, the watchers upon the walls of Rome saw in the distance the lances of the unholy armament. Gold, for two months tried upon the friends of Alexander and his chancellor, had failed; the fate of Christendom must be decided by iron. In the field of Nero the two armies of the followers of Jesus met; with stubborn will the usurper and his troops pressed onward, and it seemed certain that they would win the fight, when Godfrey, husband of Beatrice, appeared with fresh troops upon the field. The forces of Honorious, wearied and surprised, gave way, and Hildebrand triumphed by the arms

of Tuscany. But Honorious, though defeated, was not dismayed; and it was not till Anno of Cologne, as we have related, stole young Henry from his mother, and in a large council of German and Italian prelates espoused the cause of Alexander, that the anti-pope was wholly disabled, by being deprived of the support of the Empire. This occurred in the autumn of 1062. Even then he did not cease his efforts; and in the following year, by the aid of friends in Rome, he was even enabled to enter the city, and seize upon the Vatican itself; from which he was driven, however, the next day, by a rising of the people. His partisans, even after that, continued active; and it was not till the Council of Mantua, in 1066, decided the question, that it could be regarded as at rest.

But we must hasten on to the close of the reign of Alexander the Second. In 1067, the leading men of Germany counselled the king's marriage, hoping thereby to diminish the mischievous consequences of the early training Henry had received from Adalbert the Evil; for a wilder, wickeder boy-monarch has not often afflicted Europe.* But the marriage did no good; the royal couple soon entertained an honest hatred for one another, and in the very next year Henry proposed a divorce. In the midst of civil commotions, therefore, a meeting was held at Frankfort to consider the proposed measure. Henry came to the meeting unwillingly, for he had heard that a Roman legate was there to forbid the divorce. And truly there was one there,—of all men in Europe, the one best fitted for such an occasion: Peter Damien,—Peter the Hard,—the boldest, most inflexible of mortals, who reprimanded bishops as if they were schoolboys, and knocked Hildebrand himself over the knuckles without ceremony. Peter, the hater of all the voluptuous and licentious, was a special hater of an immoral king, guided by an

* In 1067, Henry was seventeen years old.

unprincipled churchman. When, therefore, the meeting was convened, he delivered the message with which he was charged from Rome, in the spirit of pride in which it was conceived: —"The measure contemplated by the king," said he, "is full of evil, unworthy not only of a monarch, but of any Christian. If this prince will not be bound by laws and canons, let him at least spare his reputation, and save himself from the scandal which so vile an act must cause. Let him not do that for which he would punish another. But if he will not renounce his evil purpose, the Holy Church must speak with her God-given authority, and never will the sovereign pontiff crown him emperor who dares thus to outrage the Christian faith." The bold messenger of Rome was sustained by the discontented nobles of the Empire, and the angry prince could do nothing but submit, and bear as he best could the matrimonial burden they had loaded him with.

Four more years passed by; the evil Adalbert returned to power; sin and corruption, discord and tyranny, ruled the court and the country of Germany. Alexander was drawing near to his tomb; but before he passed away, he determined to hold the language of a master to the young monarch who would not listen to the tones of a father. The Empire was in a ferment; the Saxons and Thuringians were in rebellion; the royal treasury was stripped to build strongholds to overawe the wild, fierce people; the nobles openly murmured; all good counsels were lost upon the reckless Henry. In want of money, he despatched Anno of Cologne and Herman of Bamberg to Italy, to obtain his dues from that land. They went, and came again, with his dues indeed, but not such as he sent for; they came with letters from the Holy See calling on Henry to appear before St. Peter's tribunal, there to give an account of his past life, and justify himself from the charge of simony, and other equally grave crimes. Thus had the day at length come, when Hildebrand's conception of the tone which the Church should assume was realized, and the

spiritual openly claimed supremacy over the temporal head of Christendom. It had wisely been withheld till then; and then it was wisely used. The German people, who would have rushed *en masse* against Rome, had she asserted such a power against a favourite ruler, rejoiced to hear the voice of the pontiff threatening the mad-cap tyrant then upon the throne; and so little sympathy was expressed for Henry by his people, that, rash and foolish as he was, he could not but tremble, and promise to reform. His promises and fears were soon forgotten, however; for on the twenty-second of March, 1073, Alexander breathed his last, and no prophet stood by Henry to tell him that the man who, as a guiding spirit, had for twenty-four years ruled the court of Rome, was about to ascend the throne himself, and to wield the thunderbolts he had been forging.

The pope was dead; the good, almost great, Alexander had gone to render his account. From mouth to mouth, on that March morning, the news spread through Rome; and every street-group buzzed with praises of the lost pontiff. The artizan had lost a patron, the poor widow a supporter, the scholar a generous friend, the churchman a model of piety; when would Rome see his like again? "And who shall succeed our most excellent Alexander? Hildebrand knows; Hildebrand will choose; we may trust the chancellor; he will arrange it for us; has he not done so since the time of meek old Bruno?" All eyes turn to Hildebrand. The wise, cold, calm archdeacon—cold and calm like Hecla in repose—ordered a fast of three days. Meantime, the last honours should be paid to the body wherein once dwelt Anselm of Lucca, Alexander the Second. Cardinals and bishops, abbots and deacons, priests and monks, in long-drawn, solemn files, enter St. Peter's church; the heavy, wavering crowd sways this way and that, striving to open and admit the sacred throng. Slowly the throng passes in, Hildebrand in the midst of them. Murmurs run through the crowd,—"Let

us name our bishop;" "Choose Hildebrand for our Shepherd?" "Yes, name him, — the archdeacon, — St. Peter wishes to have him for a successor." In ever louder murmurs, the inarticulate bass of a thousand voices swells toward clear, individual utterance, when Hildebrand springs to the pulpit. The murmurs die away; he bids them to be calm as he is, and to abandon all thought of him as the successor of their sainted father, whose burial they were to celebrate. But the ground-swell of popular feeling is not to be calmed, and the deep ocean tones begin again. A cardinal rises:—"Brethren, this is the man; from the time of sainted Leo, he has guided and defended us; no one can be found so fit to rule; and in unison with your wish clearly expressed, we, cardinals and bishops, with one voice choose Hildebrand the archdeacon for our lord and pope." The multitude reply "Amen." And now bring forth the robes and the sacred crown, clothe him, and, as Gregory the Seventh, salute him head of Christendom.

For long years had Hildebrand looked forward to that day, and yet he shrank and trembled when it came. Was he a coward, then,—willing to fight from behind pope's backs, but fearful of being in the front? Surely his own pontificate disproves that suspicion. Was he truly modest, and afraid of his own power and goodness? Few recorded lives show more of self-reliance and dauntless pride. Did he doubt whether the hour had come for the blow to be struck which he had so long meditated? Or did he tremble with excitement? Or was his conduct all hypocrisy? Whatever the motive may have been, he shrank, as we have said, when the power was pressed upon him. Trembling, he ascended the steps of the pontifical throne; mildly and peaceably he asked the approval of the German prince, as was proper by the canons of 1059; with real or assumed humility, he declared his wish to be free from the cares and burden of the papacy. But when once seated firmly, and beyond cavil

made the spiritual ruler of Christ's Church, all trembling ceased, and the most fearful outbreaks of popular or regal displeasure could not move his fixed purpose. He had planted himself on eternal truth, and the wind and the rain might beat upon, but they could never stir him. He ascended the throne; European unity began again, and the sundered nations were reunited by a new idea.

Let us look with Gregory, from that throne of his, over Europe, and see, as he saw, what had been done, and what remained to be accomplished. For twenty-four years had he been labouring, since that holyday evening when Bruno yielded to his eloquence. Which of his ideas had been realized? Neither of them. The pope was not free from the emperor; the Church was not free from the laity; Rome was not absolute; the priesthood was not pure. And yet something had been done. Did the far-seeing dreamer in those Cluny gardens expect to see all realized within one quarter of a century? Was he disappointed when he looked at the world as it yet lay about him? Confidently we may answer, No. He knew the work he had undertaken, and knew that his dust would mingle with the earth again before one half that meditated work was done. The spirits which bring despondency may have haunted the throne of Hildebrand, but his pride and his faith strove with and vanquished them. His ideas were not yet realized; an unregenerate Europe yet heaved beneath him; so much the more need of firmness, boldness, and trust in the Most High.

In the far north-west, William the Norman, with mailed hand, was crushing the last free hearts that struggled for English independence. And yet from that far land had the old Lanfranc come to Rome to ask of the pope his *pallium*, his robe of office: Rome was becoming wholly supreme in the island of the Atlantic.

In France and Germany, Philip and Henry, ignorant and scatter-brained boys, set an example of simony and immo-

rality that could not fail to corrupt all who dared to be corrupted. In those lands, Hildebrand saw clearly the battle was to be fought; the pope, single-handed, against the two strongest monarchs of Christendom. And he saw, too, that the time for half-measures and winning words was gone by: with distinctness, and as Heaven's vicegerent,* he must speak and act, and leave the consequences to the God of battles. Spain, rent and chaotic, was not yet the field for the Church to act in; one day it would be pre-eminently the arena; for the present, he would only claim it as subject to Rome. In the North, the reverence for Rome was growing, slowly and with difficulty; Scandinavia was not yet to mingle in the religious wars of Europe.

Russia, Poland, Hungary, and the East—half pagan and half heretic—were to be regarded only as a region in which to employ and educate missionaries, and as a pathway to that Holy Land where the Moslem stood triumphant. "Would it be possible," thought Hildebrand, as he looked into the future, "to unite the whole of Christendom in an effort to drive the heathen from that blessed soil. That were indeed a bond of union, and an effort in which the Church must lead." In his busy, restless mind he dreamed of the Crusades, and fashioned the way for them.

But France and Germany, Philip and Henry, were nearer than Palestine and the Moslem; they were first to be looked to. In March, 1073, Hildebrand became Gregory the Seventh; in December of the same year he wrote thus to the Bishop of Chalons:—

* "Among all those princes of our day, who, urged by a shameless love of lucre, sell the Church of God, and thus enslave and soil the Mother to whom they owe all honour, we learn that Philip, king of the French, ranks first. * * * * He, therefore, must know that we will no longer tolerate this ruin of the Church, but with the authority derived from the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, we will repress his impudent disobedience. The king must renounce this shameful, simoniacal trade; or the French,

trembling beneath the edge of a universal excommunication, must decide whether they will refuse obedience to him, or abandon their Christian faith."

The Frenchman trembled and obeyed, and another rivet was fixed in the yoke with which the monk of Cluny was binding the monarchs of Europe.

Toward Henry, Gregory, in the month of April, immediately after he had ascended the throne, had assumed a tone of mingled kindness and firmness, which, united with the internal troubles of the Empire, induced that fiery young monarch to write to him in a most respectful and friendly manner; so that at the close of the first year of Gregory's power, 1073, the appearances were of submission on the part of the two princes from whom most opposition was anticipated. But Hildebrand knew men too well to think that his end was obtained on account of this apparent submission. He understood the state of Germany, and heard of all its secret dissatisfaction; to his mind there was but one object worth living for, and he perfectly appreciated how much might be done toward attaining that object by taking advantage of the strong feelings of disgust generated by the folly of Henry. He had heard in due season of the insult offered by that prince to the counts, dukes, and bishops of Saxony, whom he invited to his palace at Goslar, and left to wait for him all day, saying that he was engaged in a game,—and who went away at last without seeing him at all. He knew also of the midnight meeting in the Goslar chapel, where the fierce descendants of those who had baffled Charlemagne prepared the means for baffling his unjust and insulting successor. The winds from beyond the Alps had borne the murmur of that great multitude, who, called together by their lords, were informed of the perfidious purposes of their king.

"'Brave Saxons,' cried Otto, the Bavarian, mounting a hillock, 'you see there castles crowning every hill, gorged with soldiers; for what are

they? To defend your country, they tell us. Defend your country here in its very centre! Defend it where there is no foe! Believe not one word of it; they are to overawe and enslave you; to them you will see your wealth carried, your daughters dragged, by the agents of this faithless king. King! no, brave men, he is no king; he has ceased to be such, for he has violated every duty of a monarch. He is the enemy of our liberty, the enemy of our country, and we must be prepared at the sword's point to defend that liberty and country!'"

Then rose up those that had been already robbed, princes and bishops, and accused the sovereign of Germany. Their hearts kindled more and more under the recital, till at length the multitude arose as one man, and with lifted hands swore to lay down their lives for freedom. This threatened outbreak Henry met by insult and renewed injustice. Hildebrand heard, as news he had expected, of the attack on Goslar by sixty thousand excited men; of the king's flight to Hartzberg; of the seige of that fortress; of the demands of the beseigers that the castles throughout their land should be destroyed; of Henry's farther flight in the night-time, through woodland paths where he had often chased the deer, over mountains and across rivers, drawing not his bridle for four days. The enthusiastic, noisy rising of the Thuringians, and the more silent discontent of the Swabians and Franconians, were all talked of in the Vatican; even the secret determination of the diet of Gerstungen to dethrone Henry, and substitute Rodolph of Swabia, was whispered at the pope's table. But Gregory himself was not there to hear these later news. Since midsummer of 1073, he had been journeying, receiving embassies from Constantinople and elsewhere, trying to obtain of the Greek Church submission to Rome, regulating Italy, interfering in the Church quarrels of Africa, and writing to France the letter which we have already quoted, threatening Philip. He turned over in his mind the affairs of the Empire, all which he was duly informed of, as we have said, by the very best authority,—probably by Rodolph himself. Long and earnestly he medi-

tated on his proper course as the representative of God on earth, while he journeyed through the whispering valleys of the Appennines, under the clear December moon. And much did he need wisdom; for in Germany every thing seemed verging to chaos.

In the dry clear cold of that winter of 1073-4, Henry, bent upon effecting the reduction of the Saxons, had gone forth from Worms, his soldiers covered with bucklers whereon were painted the great deeds of their forefathers. Over the crackling earth, across the bending ice-bridges, they plodded on hungrily, not half liking the business they were on. Bread was scarce; the mill-wheels, covered with ice, refused to turn. The days passed in murmurs; at night, supernatural arches and columns in the clear sky shook men's souls. The Saxons, on their part, were pressed with hunger too; the rude masses said to their lords that they must make peace, fight, or go home; freeze and starve any longer they would not. The king's friends grew ever colder,—the Saxon boors waxed fiercer; negotiations and threats, threats and promises, passed back and forth through the mountains. Spring was coming, and the boors must be at home; so it was "fight or treat at once." Henry treated. He gave up his forts; promised to right all wrongs, to restore all stolen goods, to forgive the rebels, and to behave more like a king and a Christian. The streets of his old court city, Goslar, were filled with shouting multitudes; the windows beamed with beauty; the young, handsome, daring king had yielded to his subjects' just demand, and the civil war was over. Peace and plenty, joy and virtue, must reign thenceforward. With smiling face, half angry and half pleased, the monarch rode through the happy throng, confirmed to the citizens their old grants, gave them new ones,

"And all went merry as a marriage bell."

But the golden age had not come. The king had promised

to give up all his castles; but he could not bear to do so; his pet château at Hartzberg he must keep, if it were only for the sake of the church there, founded by Charlemagne. Instantly the applauding voices sank into threatening growls; his life was in danger. He must yield, then; and he did yield, so far as to destroy the outer walls. This calmed the multitudes, but only for a season. Henry left Saxony for the Rhine; and, as he crossed the frontier, grinding his teeth, he vowed never to return thither till he could do so as a master, and ride his rebel subjects with boot and spur. He said this, or was reported to have said it. Every man at Goslar told it to his neighbour, and from the city the news of the threatened tyranny spread up the wooded hill-sides, and reached the peasant in his field, and the hunter in his mountain covert. The garrison at Hartzberg mourned the absence of the merry king, almost a week gone; lazily they paced the court-yards, or clambered over the fragments of the razed outer-wall, and whispered of the day when the hill would wear a prouder crown than ever. Night came; the forest-moanings were mingled with the sound of peasants' horns and distant voices. The knights of the castle listened in doubt and fear. Doubt soon fled, for nearer and nearer came the sounds of a great multitude, pressing on without order, without a leader, without military music or knightly array. The wild, fierce Saxon peasantry, in their blind wrath, are upon them. By fire or force every thing goes down; church and altar, the royal sepulchre and the martyrs' relics, the golden chalice and the lawn robe, are doomed to the same destruction by the raging offspring of the old pagan manslayers. A few hours, and the mountain stands as bare as God made it.

Let us pass to Cologne,—the rich, happy city of the Rhine, where old Anno, the king-stealer, still presided in 1074. In the late troubles he had taken part against Henry; but the people of Cologne loved the prodigal monarch. They also

had a grudge against their archbishop, who was of a somewhat hasty and overbearing temper. A Westphalian bishop, a friend of his, had come up to spend a church festival with Anno in the spring of this year. The festival was over, and the bishop proposed to return home. He wished a boat for this purpose, and the archbishop, having none at hand, sent his men to find one. They seized one belonging to a rich merchant, which was filled with goods, throwing out the goods without leave or ceremony. Of this the merchant's son got word; and, in his young haste, followed by the house-servants, he went and demanded the instant restitution of his father's bark. The prelate's servants refused it; words were soon followed by blows, and a crowd gathering, the tumult swelled rapidly.

The archbishop, who was sitting at the table with his friend from Westphalia, hearing of the difficulty, sent word that the young law-breakers who had made the trouble should suffer at the next session of court. This was putting out the fire with oil; the young merchant instantly advocated open resistance; Worms had driven out her bishop, why not Cologne her archbishop? they were both enemies of the noble, generous young Henry! Men armed themselves, the shops were closed prematurely, window-shutters were carefully bolted, the great thoroughfares were deserted, and the bye-ways filled. As evening came on the masses moved toward the episcopal palace in silent determination. Anno, with the parting cup in his hand, his head half-bent in salutation to his guest, heard the muffled sounds, and paused. All around the table listened with open ears, when, as from a military engine, arrows and stones flung from a thousand stout arms broke through every window, wounding and killing those within. Horror and despair dispersed those who were about the festal board, and the prelate with his friends fled to the church of St. Peter, which he barricaded. The palace was stripped, its treasures cast to the mob; the

wine-casks were staved, so that the cellars were flooded, and men were drowned in them. The chapel was ransacked, the altars overturned, and holy vessels and vestments were no more respected by the mad citizens of Cologne than by the mad boors of Saxony. For three days the tumult continued, and the former quiet city scarcely knew itself. Anno, meanwhile, had with difficulty escaped from the church in which he had taken refuge; he had thrown himself upon the country, where his friends were found; and not a week had passed before the burghers saw coming near an army which they knew they could not resist,—an army composed of men marching against the sacreligious enemies of the Holy Church. The despairing citizens attempted no defence; the violators of the chapels were excommunicated, the leaders of the mob were blinded or beaten; and, while the forces of the prelate began an indiscriminate plunder, six hundred of the richest citizens fled in one night to the king. The rich bustling city became a lifeless solitude. Such were the scenes which Germany presented in 1074.

Upon such a Germany, filled with violence and misrule, with married priests and simoniacal nobles, a land of disorder, ruled by a king who could create only disorder, Gregory looked anxiously and with doubt as to the course which his duty required of him. In that year, 1074, he met his first council; simony and marriage among the clergy were denounced in the strongest terms; and in connexion with the condemnatory canons the doctrine was promulgated, that every Christian owed a stronger allegiance to the Roman than to his own peculiar bishop. The canons were instantly sent to Italy, Germany, and France; and every means were brought to bear upon the higher ecclesiastics, to induce them to enforce the penalties of simony and incontinence. Legates from Rome also beset the German king, while his mother, Agnes, poured her remonstrances into his unwilling ears. The Bishops of Bremen and Bamberg were suspended until

they should appear at Rome, and prove themselves innocent of the charges of simony; and Germany at large advised that the decrees of the Church should be obeyed. But it was easier to give this notice than to obtain obedience. When the Archbishop of Mayence attempted to carry out the canons relative to marriages, he was resisted by bishops, clergy, and people, and nearly lost his life in the tumult. But Gregory paused not a moment; to bishops, princes, archbishops, and the king himself, his letters were unceasing, and the constant burden was,—"Fear not, despair not; extinguish simony and enforce celibacy, and God will uphold you." The Crusade, long lying near his heart, he also wrote of, and prepared the way, in the minds of men, for that great enterprise.

Turning from Henry to Philip of France, he dealt that prince the hardest blows, so far as words can strike. He distinctly informed both king and people, that "with God's help he would deliver the kingdom of France from his oppression," unless he radically changed. In England and Spain, also, his letters and legates asserted the supremacy of Rome.

But the great moral evils of the Church were not yet done away; never had they been more prominent. Was Gregory, then, wholly defeated and disappointed? We think not. He must have known that mere words could not overturn the corruption of ages; what good, then, in using them? They attracted men's minds to the subject, raised a papal party everywhere, and gave courage and a voice to the heretofore silent advocates of reform. His words were seeds; they fell, and were apparently lost; but they were lost in human bosoms, where in silence they germinated, and made possible that perfect papal despotism which they taught, and which later generations witnessed.

Into the details of events in the year 1075 we cannot enter; with one exception, they were like those of the previous year.

Gregory pressed his canons unceasingly, the priests and nobles resisted, legates and letters passed to and fro, from January till August. Henry and the Saxons were again at war, and at length he was victorious. Then his true purposes and character showed themselves; thus far he had been pliant and yielding; now he became fiercely opposed to Hildebrand. He stopped not at the grossest simony, and cared not for the most barefaced injustice. Yet at this very time, he had the impudence to ask of Gregory the deposition of the bishops who had opposed him. At the same moment that the emperor thus appealed to the Holy See, the Saxons did the same; and the pope saw that the hour was at hand when he must cease speaking and act. One more letter he wrote, to tell the monarch that, unless he obeyed the orders of the Church, he should be excommunicated. Then followed legates summoning him to Rome to clear himself of the crimes charged, under pain of an instant separation from the Church of Christ. Henry's hot blood leaped at the insult; with flashing eyes he expelled the legates, and summoned an immediate council at Worms. Hither flocked all the discontented; the houses were crowded with priests' families, and buyers and sellers of holy offices; the streets echoed with curses upon the monk of Cluny, the carpenter's son, who dared outlaw a monarch. The pope was accused of every crime, even of murder and necromancy. In the council, the most violent charges were made against him; and at length a messenger took horse to cross the Alps, bearing a letter from Henry to the Romans, calling on them to expel the false monk Hildebrand from the papal throne.

The messenger reached Rome, entered the synod where Gregory sat on high, and called upon him to come down from the place he had usurped. The Romans could scarce believe their senses; the prefect drew his sword, but the pope shielded the bold speaker with his own body. He calmed the tumult, showed the gathering crowd the necessity of cool

determination, explained the inevitable contest that was before them; and, taking from the person of the messenger the letters which he bore, read them aloud. Couched in the most insulting terms, they raised the fury of the listeners almost beyond control; and when Gregory told them how mildly he had treated Henry, until he showed himself utterly inimical to the Holy Church,—when, with tearful eyes, he described his own struggles, his efforts to keep peace, his kind remonstrances, his fatherly admonitions, his long-suffering and patience,—the whole assembly rose and demanded in the name of God's justice the instant promulgation of the anathema against the perjured and tyrannical king of Germany. Gregory stood forth, calm and resolute, with uplifted hand and upturned eyes, appealing to Heaven. One short prayer he uttered, while the stillness of death sank down upon the assembly.

"Blessed and holy Peter," the calm, deep voice began, "hear thy servant whom thou hast brought up and delivered from the hands of wicked men, who have hated me because I have been faithful to thee. Thou art my witness, thou and the blessed Virgin, that the Roman Church has called me, despite myself, to govern her, and that I had rather end my life in exile than usurp the chair by unworthy means. But finding myself, by thy goodness and not my own merit, thy successor, I cannot but believe that it is thy will that all Christians should obey me, God having given me, as in thy place, power to bind and to loose upon the earth.

"In that faith, for the honour and safety of the Church, in the name of the all-powerful God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and by thy authority, I forbid Henry, son of the Emperor Henry the Third, who through unheard-of pride has placed himself against thy Church, to govern the kingdoms of Germany and Italy; I absolve all Christians from the oath which they have taken or may take to serve him, and I forbid all men to obey him as king. And since he has refused to act as a Christian, and has persisted in living with evil, excommunicated men, in thy name I load him with curses, that the world may know that thou art Peter, and that upon this Rock the Son of the living God has built his Church, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

The deep voice of Hildebrand, so earnest, solemn, and

collected, ceased; but the silence of the hundred and ten bishops remained unbroken; they dared not move. And when this solemn act was followed by the excommunication of archbishops, abbots, counts, and nobles, almost without number, they trembled at the boldness of their master: in upper Italy he left but two bishops undeposed.

Such were the labours of the Synod of 1076; they cast a thunderbolt among the nations. All Germany, all Western Europe, was divided; no ears could be longer closed to the quarrel; every peasant with his plough, every wife with her distaff, must thenceforth be for Pope or Emperor. At first men were against the newly-asserted spiritual power; but had not Christ given Peter all power, and was not the Roman bishop Peter's successor? The dim, wavering forms of superstition became the ready allies of Hildebrand. Sounds were heard in the night-air; sights of horror passed across the sky; the adherents of Henry died fearful deaths. Then rose the Saxons again; every day saw the mere temporal prince weaker, every day the undefinable dread grew stronger and spread wider. Walls would not shut it out, dungeons would not hold it; the curse of the Church, the anathema of God, like a terrible ghost, haunted men. In the midst of their revels, while they pledged the king, the clinking of the goblets was mingled with the echo of God's voice forbidding them; they dreamed of the excommunication, they woke to hear it reiterated. Every day Henry lost adherents. Nor were the deserters merely those who were urged by superstition. Germany was of old ruled by its several princes; these the great emperors had subjected, and made the imperial power all-powerful. The emperor and the princes were opposed, and the latter defeated. They now saw, by a union with the pope, the means of rising again in the political scale, and overthrowing the central force which had subjected both Church and feudal sovereigns. Thus they were led to incline strongly in favour of Gregory's pretensions; and

the Diet of 1076 was willing, in connexion with the pope, to depose the excommunicated king.

Henry, who, with all his hot-headed inconstancy, could act with decision when necessity called, and who saw himself literally deserted, determined to submit, and to obtain the pope's forgiveness. We need not dwell upon the particulars of his journey to Canossa. All have heard of his climbing the snowy Alps, with danger and difficulty feeling his way along the precipices and among the glaciers, and sliding in a sled of hide, lowered carefully by peasant hands, down to the plains of Lombardy. All have been told of his three days' waiting, bareheaded and barefooted, in the bitter cold, for admission to the presence of the carpenter's son; and all know how hardly he obtained forgiveness at last. And when he did obtain it, it amounted to nothing. He was not reinstated in his regal rights, and had disgusted and cast off, by his humiliation, those that had clung to him. His very guards called aloud for a new emperor; the common people scoffed at him; the cities would not receive the mean-spirited monarch; encamped in the fields, he found himself shivering and starving in the midst of a universal hiss of contempt. Who can tell the rage of that proud, inconstant, undisciplined soul? He knew not where to turn, or how to give his anger and agony vent. Foiled in an attempt to make Gregory his prisoner, he turned, like a loosed lion, upon Germany. His character seemed changed; with unlooked-for energy and decision he gathered an army, swept like a tempest through Swabia, Franconia, and Bavaria, leaving behind him a desert, nor ever ceased his mad career of revenge, until, seven years after his miserable humiliation at Canossa, he entered Rome in triumph.

We need not dwell upon those years. They offer us nothing but the rage of the emperor, the immovable courage of Hildebrand, and the devotion of the Countess Matilda to the Holy See. Of the two first our readers know enough; of

Matilda we cannot say sufficient to give any just idea of her peculiar and noble character.

The year 1085 opened amid a chaos in Germany and Italy; war, famine, pestilence, and floods made all men bow in misery and fear. Gregory, from his stronghold in Salerno, looked down upon the crooked, narrow, lava-paved streets of his last refuge, and off upon the blue gulf, dimpled by wandering winds. How beautiful the works of God looked to the worn combatant!—so calm, so pure, so divine! His mind turned to the world of man, rent and blood-stained, and his heart was sick within him. What had he accomplished toward that regeneration of Europe which he had so long dreamed of? Were his aims attained? Was the Church free, pure, united, acknowledged ruler of rulers? He felt within him the failing of his overtasked nature; his heart beat languidly; his time had nearly come, and how had he sped with his work? Never, perhaps, had there been a period of greater confusion and discord within and without the Church, and seldom less purity or union. As for the supremacy of Rome,—alas! the chief of bishops, betrayed by Romans, pursued by Germans and Italians thirsting for his blood, at variance with France, Spain, and England, was dying a forsaken exile. Had Hildebrand's sick heart failed him then, it would not have been strange; but he looked at his crucifix, at the image of his forsaken, dying, and yet victorious Master, and grew strong; for that told him how little the final triumph of a moral truth can be judged of from immediate success or failure. "And I too," he murmured to himself, in words which, a few weeks later, were the last upon his lips,—"and I, too, have loved justice, and hated iniquity, and I die an exile." The future, in which all his great principles triumphed, was hidden to him; but he knew that God ruled, that the great thoughts which by his struggles he had made familiar to men, rested not on his strength, but on an eternal basis; and that, though he

was passing away, the Omnipotent remained as the world's ruler;—he knew that he had sown the seed, and that God would give the harvest.

The mild May weather lent daily new beauty to the outer world, and the languid eyes of the monk of Cluny loved to dwell upon the deepening verdure. Sometimes his soul mingled again with its old ardour in the contests that were raging; he called his attendant bishops to remind them once more never to own any one pope who was not chosen according to the canons. Then his mind went back to the green valleys of the Appennines, to shepherd's-huts and the snow-fed rills of spring-time; and it passed thence to the heaven he was approaching. Again he murmured, "I have loved justice and hated evil, therefore I die in exile." The aged bishop, who had risen from the pleasant window as he heard the voice, bent over him and said, "Not so, Holy Father, you cannot die in exile; for God has given you all nations for a heritage, and the ends of the earth for a dominion." The calm, grave lips moved not in reply; Gregory was not there; the overburdened heart had ceased to beat; the wise, fearless, immovable Hildebrand had gone into the presence of his God. Hildebrand had gone, but his words and struggles, as sown seed, remained; and soon Europe saw his victorious enemy, Henry the Fourth, sink on a door-step and die of cold and hunger, because Rome had cast him off; she saw a strong-minded Frederick, Emperor of the West, holding a pope's stirrup-iron; she saw France and England quail beneath papal interdicts;—in short, she saw, long after the dust of Hildebrand had mingled with the earth, each one of Hildebrand's ideas made practice; she saw the Church independent, united, free from simony and priest-marriages, and the ruler of rulers. The visions of the Cluny arbours were realized; Europe again was one.

THE

FOUNDER OF THE JESUITS

THE Jesuits! It is a word of terror, which M. Michelet and his friend utter in the ears of their countrymen; of terror even to many of their Catholic brethren. Nor is the dread of this long-slumbering, but now re-awakening, body confined to France. Jesuitism is spreading, and silently acquiring strength in the United States; for good or for evil, it is gaining ground among us; and many, whose eyes are open to the fact, see in our future history *auto-da-fes* and inquisitions, and Protestantism destroyed by a new St. Bartholomew. Under these circumstances, we have thought that a sketch of the founder of Jesuitism, of his purposes and constitutions, might be interesting and even useful.

It was in the year 1491, that the word spread from the ancestral castle up into the valleys of Guipuzcoa, that another son was born to the noble house of Ogner and Loyola. Already had Don Bertram seven sons and three daughters, before the birth of Ignatius, the last-born of the family. And what a world was that upon which his eyes first opened! In Germany, a little, fair-haired Martin Luther, eight years old, was gathering fagots with his mother in the woods of

Des Jésuites. Par MM. MICHELET et QUINET. Paris: 1843.

Mansfeld. In Florence, a polished, treacherous Lorenzo de Medici, worn out with gout and intrigue, was preparing to take to his death-bed, and sue without success to the haughty, unhappy monk, Savonarola, for absolution. In Rome, a Roderic Borgia, the incarnation of evil, was looking forward to the day when, as Alexander the Sixth, he should preside over the Christian Church. In Spain itself, the Moor was fighting his last battles, and breathing his last sigh; and Columbus was standing ready to prove with his life the truth of his bold speculations. Ignatius had not yet walked alone, or mastered his first word, before Granada yielded, Lorenzo died, Columbus sailed, and the Holy College, guarded by armed men, chose the vilest churchman of Christendom as its supreme head.

Six years of his life passed by, and the youngest son of Loyola, handsome, intelligent, proud, ambitious, was already destined to the life of a courtier, and given as a page to Ferdinand the Catholic, when that same overbearing monk, Savonarola, who had refused absolution to the chief of Florence unless he would restore freedom to his country, and all that he had usurped from them to his neighbours, stood forth against the abominable Borgia; and on the birthday of his Saviour proclaimed it, as a revelation made to him from God, that he was not to obey the corrupt see of Rome. Men looked on admiring, and fancied the day of retribution had come. Not yet; this was but the first blush of its morning, and their admiration and fancy died with the unhappy Dominican, whose weak recantations, a year later, were mingled with the hissing of his blood on the coals which were consuming him. The day was not yet; the great champions were not ready; the little Martin was now a stout scholar of fifteen, singing for bread at Magdeburg and Eisenach; Ignatius, a boy of seven, was waiting on his most Catholic Majesty.

Years pass away; vast events, to our eyes vague and

ghost-like, flit across the stage of European history. Spain and France—mighty burglars—agree to enter and divide the booty of Naples; they enter it, quarrel, and Spain remains mistress. Charles is born, heir to Austria, and Arragon, and Burgundy, and Castile. Cæsar Borgia rages like a wolf through the whole centre of Italy. Venice, that mighty monster of the sea, contends with Turkey, France, the Emperor, the Pope, the Duke of Ferrara, the Marquis of Mantua, and Ferdinand of Arragon; and yet, though the ocean is red with her blood, lives and fights on. The Pope Borgia dies,—dies of his own poison-cup, prepared for another, but seized on thoughtlessly by himself after riding on a warm day; he and Cæsar both drink; the latter outlives it, being plunged by his physicians into the warm and reeking entrails of a mule; but the father is too gross, and dies, and the armed head of Julius fills his place.

Amid all this confused hubbub, Luther sits quietly at Erfurt, studying his Thomas Aquinas, his Cicero and Virgil; but above all, when once found, David and Isaiah, and John, and Paul, and Jesus. Quietly he sits there, his half-muttered exclamations of delight hardly audible in that world of contest and dispute; and yet within him is preparing matter with noise enough in it to make all Europe rock. Little Charles of Spain, heir to so many thrones, a lad of some three years old, never once suspects, as he plays with his golden tassels, that so much trouble for his future life is preparing in the centre of Germany. But so it was ordained; by study, by sickness, by the murder of his friend, by the lightning of heaven, Luther is led on, forced on, till we see him, in the night-time, knocking for admission at the hermit-house of St. Augustine. The Saint admits him, bestows his own name upon him, and, to uproot the pride of his heart, sends him forth to beg bread of his old friends. He is not merely in Augustine's house, and bearing the name of Augustine; but the writings of the old African become, by intense study

through ten years, first at Erfurt, then at Wittenberg, his key to the Bible, to life, and to his own heart. The greatest doctor of the Roman Church becomes, in Luther's hands, its deadliest enemy.

We look elsewhere, and find that the boy Ignatius had chafed at his pacific duties as a page, and, under Don Antonio Manrique, has long since become a soldier. When Luther went to Wittenberg, Ignatius was a lad of seventeen, gay, brave, and gallant; when Luther struck his first blow at the Church theology, Loyola was a daring and devoted soldier of twenty-five. Handsome and vain, without any other moral guide than honour and good feeling, beloved by his followers, admired by the courtiers, with a taste for poetry, and absorbed in the pursuits of war and pleasure, there is hardly a man in Europe who seems less likely to do battle with the bull-necked Augustinian of Saxony. Five years more pass by, and, in 1521, the monk stands before the Imperial Diet at Worms, the eyes of Europe fastened upon him: far off, looking down from the towers of Pampeluna on the pleasant plain about it, and across to the steep mountains which rise on every side, the soldier, unseen by Europe, waits the coming of the French army under Esparre. There are few troops in the town, and they are determined to surrender. Ignatius, a mere looker-on, without command, scolds and persuades to no purpose; he retires into the citadel, followed by one soldier. The commander of the citadel also wishes to surrender, and Loyola opposes him. A conference is held with the French, and Loyola, to break it off, becomes violent and insulting; the French, angry at his conduct, leave the meeting; and now they must fight. As a volunteer, he leads the van, and is the soul of the little garrison. The French guns have thrown down the wall, and Ignatius is in the gap; hot, and fierce, and obstinate is the contest. Suddenly the self-made leader falls, his right leg broken by a cannon ball, his left torn by a splinter. The

contest is over, and the flag of France waves above the high walls and narrow streets of the capital of Navarre.

There were two castles in Europe which in that year, 1521, held strong men, engaged in fierce internal struggles; the one was the Waldburg, overlooking the blue mountains and the Thuringian plains; the other, Loyola, from which, perhaps, across the vales and hill-sides, the eye might catch a glimpse of the sea of Biscay. In the former sat Luther, doubting, dyspeptic, "uttering cries like a woman in travail;" his mind and pen never resting, his great heart corroding in solitude, the enemy of God and man torturing and mocking him. In vain he sung the songs he had sung at Eisenach; in vain he leant against the oak and listened to the nightingale; in vain he gave his whole soul to the task of reviving a vase of violets which the snow had caused to droop, and wept like a child over one that defied his power. His soul was at ease only in the busy struggle of the world, and in his "Patmos" did but grow more bitter against all opponents. In the other castle lay Ignatius, lame, sick, hopelessly deformed. His broken limb had been set unskilfully, and he caused it to be fractured again; a bone projected near the knee, and he made the surgeons cut it off, scoffing at the agony; the leg was still too short, and he stretched himself on the rack to lengthen it. It was all in vain; he was hopelessly deformed. How bitter to the young courtier, the handsome soldier, were those words,—hopelessly deformed! The light of life was eclipsed, and the music of praise was silenced for ever.

Thin and pale, with lips grown white from suffering, and eyes too proud to weep, but dull with dead hopes, Loyola lay waiting the administration of the eucharist. It was the vigil of the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the medical attendants said he could hardly live till morning. The priest came, and the mysterious wafer was given to the dying man. But before his dying sight still flitted the forms of enemies

he had slain, and ladies he had loved; he had eaten of the body of Christ, but was far from being filled with his spirit. The night wore on; the relatives, one by one, retired; with failing vision Ignatius watched the fantastic figures on the tapestry, as they moved with the mountain wind, until, to his faint brain, they seemed like living men. Old familiar faces smiled or scowled on him; at moments he remembered the rite just administered, and then he thought of the holy men whose festival was to come on the morrow. Again he lost all consciousness, and then, recovering himself, asked if it was death or sleep. Such intervals became more and more frequent; he was then passing away, and with cold lips he tried to fashion a prayer to Jesus, to Paul, to Peter. His lips ceased moving, his eyes closed; the watchers by his side, worn out, dozed in silence. The wind stirring the forest boughs, and the tread of the sentinel, were the only sounds heard in the castle. At that hour, to the unconverted soldier, whose heart beat so wearily, appeared the majestic form of an old man, whose quick, kind eye filled with tears as he gazed upon him. "I am Peter," said the old man, "and I am sent of God to heal and save thee." He touched Ignatius with his hand, and then turning passed the watchers, who waked not, though his garments swept their feet,—and disappeared. Daylight stole over the Pyrenees, and the watchers of Loyola wakened like guilty men, and crept to the bed-side to see if he still lived. Calmly breathing, with placid brow, and cheeks no longer drawn by pain, the Heaven-rescued man slept as one to whom health has come again. His heart was no longer weary, no longer wholly given to the world; the apostle had driven out disease, and planted the germ of that faith which was to develope into Jesuitism.

The germ,—it was but the germ,—and the great enemy, tired of buzzing about Luther's ears in vain, strove hard to root out what the apostle had planted. The lame, but now

convalescing man, as he lay there hour after hour, day after day, thinking of the future, grew nervous and impatient, and longed to be amused. They searched the castle for novels; there was not one that he had not read again and again. Those old chivalric romances had been his Bible for many a day; his faith, and thence his life, had been shaped by them; from them he had drawn that spirit of gallantry and war which had sustained him thus far, and was, under new forms, to sustain him through yet greater contests, and to lead him to greater victories. They brought him "The Lives of the Saints," St. Benedict, St. Dominic, and St. Francis; these, at least, he had never read. How he turned the book over, and glanced it through in utter despair, is not written, but is none the less sure. Then the remembrance of his dream, or of the actual visit of St. Peter,—he knew not which to think it,—came over him, and his eye caught the account of the miraculous conversion of St. Francis. He read it through with care, read it again, and a third time. He thought of his own past life, of his miraculous cure, of the impossibility that he should thenceforth be a soldier, of the conquests which the holy men, whose written lives lay before him, had effected, of the work yet to be done, of the field yet white with the harvest. His eye kindled with a new hope, his hollow cheek flushed with the fever of a new ambition; and turning to the beginning of the volume which a few hours before seemed so tedious, he read it with his heart. Then rose the curtain from that dark future over which he had brooded so long; he saw God's purposes in his wounds and sickness; he knew why he had been torn from the war-saddle, and stripped of his manly beauty. He was a chosen vessel; God had great objects in store for him; he might regain the Holy Land, the Lord's sepulchre, Calvary, and Bethlehem, not, like the old crusaders, with an arm of flesh, but by the omnipotence of spiritual power. Who can tell what visions passed before the mind of the

warm-blooded Spaniard, as, with many struggles and relapses,—by prayer, and reading, and silent thought,—he became the soldier of Christ; threw up his allegiance to [redacted] pain, and bound himself to God, and the whole [redacted] quenched for ever his cherished love "for a noble lady of the court of Castile," and devoted himself to her [redacted] indeed greater than countess or duchess, even to Mary the Virgin?

His friends saw the change, and guessed the cause. His brother urged him to remember his renown, his warlike genius, and "to do nothing foolish." Ignatius answered little, discussed nothing, promised nothing, wavered not at all. He who had been stretched on a rack to lengthen his leg, would not be easily turned aside from the redemption of a world. He was now well, and one day proposed to ride over to Navarreta to see Manrique, his instructor and companion in arms. With two servants he quitted his home; how calm outwardly, how full of fire within, we may imagine. We can almost see him turning his horse, as he ascends the last hill that overlooks Loyola; and while his servants on their mules jog along under the oaks and chestnuts, we can observe his lips move as he bids farewell for ever to home, friends, wealth, fame, and pleasure, and with iron will binds himself to poverty, chastity, pain, self-denial, and reproach. He visited Manrique, sent back his servants, and pursued his way alone across the peninsula to Montserrat.

There was at that time in the monastery of Montserrat a Frenchman, John Chanones, who had been long a man of the world and distinguished in it; but the Holy Spirit had called him, and he sat on the mountain, chief-confessor of the pilgrims who flocked thither. One evening, there came to him a man richly dressed, with the manner of a knight; and, though thin and feeble in appearance, wholly unlike the common people who thronged to his confessional. The holy father listened to his words, which were those of an agonized

soul. His confession would be long and trying; he had written it, he said, that he might omit nothing, and asked leave of the priest to commence on the morrow. He did so, and for three days, upon his knees, interrupted only by his own sighs and lamentations, did Ignatius pour into that sympathizing ear the tale of his sins, his sufferings, his conversion, his purposes, his temptations, and his fears. Well versed himself in the dangers of the world, the confessor listened with feeling, and answered with wise words. He showed Loyola how Satan slips into the very act of conversion, and prompts the half-saved soul to spiritual pride; he pointed out the true light for the penitent to pursue, and the dangers he would need especially to guard against; he sketched for him the varying features of the Evil One, so that he might know them even when they came before him in the guise of an angel's countenance.

Strengthened and purified, Ignatius left his weary post on the third evening; and, going forth, sought out the meanest beggar of the place, and bestowed upon him his rich apparel, clothing himself in the coarse gown and simple sandals of a common pilgrim. His sword, however, was still by his side; retained there, that in due time it might be dedicated to his holy mistress. That night the devotee, who rose as the clock tolled twelve to pray before the altar of the Virgin, was startled to find there a man pacing to and fro, as the young candidate for knighthood was accustomed to do before his admission to his order. In a pilgrim's dress, but with the bearing of a soldier, and carrying in his hand a knight's sword sheathed, this solitary figure walked there before the altar, or knelt, or stood gazing upward, muttering prayers, or talking in low tones to himself, from midnight to early morning. He then hung the sword upon a pillar near the shrine, for the last time dedicated himself to the service of Our Lady, received the communion, and on foot, with bare head, sought concealment in the hospital of Manresa, until

the port of Barcelona should be opened, and the way to the Holy Sepulchre lie clear before him.

Meanwhile, the great warfare with the flesh and the devil was to be maintained; so he girt himself with an iron chain, put on a shirt of hair, fasted on bread and water, or, if he ate herbs, sprinkled them with ashes, slept upon the ground, and thrice a day applied the scourge to his flesh. Seven hours of every twenty-four he spent upon his knees in prayer; to wound his pride, he begged from door to door; and to confound that personal vanity which had so long ruled him, he made himself revolting to the sight, so that the children stoned him in the streets. But at this very time a report spread in the village, that the loathsome beggar was a grandee of Spain, and men began to look on him with altered eyes, and met him as if he had been a saint. The Great Tempter came, too, and whispered, that if he would only return, changed and sanctified as he was, to his old haunts, the court and camp, he would be able to reform and regenerate them. But Ignatius knew the features of the deceiver, and plying his scourge with redoubled force, shouted, "Away from me, Satan!" and for a time he fled. Then he came again, in a new form, and despondency stole over the heart of the weakened devotee; but again he was recognized and foiled. A third time he came, and whispered in a voice of kindness words of comfort. Why should this penitent fear to die? Was he not saintly in his sufferings and self-mortification? Was he not approved and beloved of God and Jesus? Angels seemed to descend and invite him to paradise. But the enthusiast was even here a match for the tempter. He called to mind all his sins anew, exaggerated them, dwelt on them, made men sit by him and recite them in his ears, until the false heaven and the fallen angels vanished.

Words cannot picture the mental condition of Ignatius Loyola during that period of his life. We may call him

fanatical, mad, hypocritical, perhaps; but call him what we will, he was training his nature to endurance and labor such as few men have ever encountered. To form any just opinion of what he was, however, we should study his "Spiritual Exercises," composed chiefly at this time, in 1522. In them shines forth the most marvellous compound of extravagance and good sense—of the wildest enthusiasm and the calmest wisdom—of intense, heart-rending passion, and deliberate meditation. His life was a similar compound. He united then, in a manner which has characterized his order to this day, overwhelming impulses with the coolest judgment, manifested in adapting means to ends.

The parallel between Loyola as he was in 1522, and Luther as he was when at Erfurt, sixteen years earlier, which has been run by Ranke and d'Aubigné, we regard as entirely unjust; for when we consider that Luther's struggles with himself arose from the action of conscience and intellect, were waged by means of his intellect, and terminated in a doctrine,—while Loyola's came from conscience and a past life of wrong-doing, went on by the instrumentality of imagination and feeling, and resulted in a new life,—we see no ground for any comparison between the two. Luther's whole process, which, we repeat, led him to a doctrine, and not to the Reformation, was characterized by those features, both good and evil, which distinguish Protestantism, and Loyola's by those which are peculiar to Catholicism; and any parallel between the two men is but a comparison of the two faiths which they embodied, and addresses itself to prejudice, and not to fair judgment.

At length the plague ceased, and the port of Barcelona was opened. Loyola embarked for Italy, followed by the prayers and blessings of thousands; for he had become known far and wide, had preached and exhorted to the conversion of many, and was already sainted in hundreds of warm and pure hearts. He went to Rome to receive the Pope's blessing,

thence to Venice to embark, and on the 31st of August, 1523, landed at Jaffa. When Ignatius reached the Holy Land, with his heart burning to convert the infidel Turks, and rescue the sepulchre of Jesus from pollution by rescuing those who polluted it from Mohammed,—Luther, on his part, was just commencing, in defiance of the Elector, now trembling under the hand of death, his warfare upon the mass, "the sacrilege of Tophet." "Ketha," not yet his, and, indeed, hardly over the tremour which she felt as she left, with her companions, the monastery of Nimptsch, looked on admiring from the house of the burgomaster of Wittenberg. Luther triumphed; the dean, frightened by the reformer's bulls, ordained the cessation of the great Catholic sacrifice in the church of All Saints, on Christmas day, 1524. The monastery, too, at that time, was no longer a home for monks, but had become the property of the University; and Catharine Bora was beginning to think that she might yet be the wife of the great reformer.

Luther triumphed, but not so Loyola. His bright dreams of converting the heathen were all dispelled by the absolute command of the Pope's representative in Jerusalem, that he should return forthwith to Europe. The Franciscan little knew to what a proud heart he spoke; his easy eye saw nothing of the struggle in the enthusiast's breast, as he bent without one word to the authority of the Church, resigned his new ambition, crushed his new hopes, and forgot his disappointments in a long, last gaze upon the miraculous footprints of Jesus on the Mount of Olives. Five months after he landed at Jaffa, Ignatius was again in Europe; and when Luther, on the 11th of June, 1525, went up with his bride to the house of Amsdorff to receive the nuptial benediction, Ignatius was studying Latin among little children in the grammar-school of Barcelona. He had been led to think, as he returned from Palestine, that, to convert others, he must himself become wiser, a linguist and a theologian; and

there he sat, with difficulty mastering the rules of Latin syntax, while the heart of Europe stood still with dismay at the Insurrection of the Peasants. There he sat, studying, contending with the evil one, who for ever drove out his Latin verbs with Spanish prayers; or waited on the sick in the hospitals; or preached to those of evil lives; or won to the Church the innocent who were yet beyond its fold; a saint in the eyes of many, and gifted with divine power, but among the last one would even then have selected to meet the triumphant monk who had worsted popes, emperors, and kings.

At the end of two years, he went to Alcala to study philosophy, followed by three disciples, to whom a fourth was added at that place. And he studied philosophy, not in Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas,—who were not much more to his taste than to Luther's,—but in the highways and hovels, in prisons and by the side of dying men,—now among the dissolute students, and now amid a group of little children; he studied and he taught, and to such purpose that men thought him a magician, or at least a heretic. The ears of the Inquisition were at that time wide open, for the din of the Lutheran battle drove away sleep; even Spain was menaced, and every suspected man was watched with countless eyes. The abominable practices of Loyola and his disciples, which consisted mainly in doing ten times as much good as the priests, looked very like heresy; and quietly, but speedily, inquisitors from Toledo passed to Alcala. The whole life of Ignatius was examined, but neither magic nor heresy was found in it; and in silence the terrible inquirers sped back again, only requiring of the accused, through the Vicar-General, to go no more barefoot,—no very severe sentence for that tribunal.

But Satan, who had so long been trying to corrupt Loyola, all to no purpose, was bent upon trying what danger and suffering could do; and it was not long before a new accusa-

tion arose, of such a character as caused the Vicar-General to cast him into prison, where he lay many weeks; and when proved wholly innocent, he was released with the injunction, that he should give up preaching under penalty of excommunication. This was on the 1st of June, 1527. The sufferings of poor Loyola were now complete. Six years ago, all worldly honour and power were torn from him, and he gave them up without a sigh; two years later, the haughty Franciscan of Palestine demanded the abandonment of hopes and plans that were deep in his heart, and he abandoned them instantly; and now he is bidden, by one who speaks almost with divine authority, to give up what he had so long believed the voice of the Almighty required him to exercise.

It was a trial even for a saint's faith and patience. With reverence he remonstrated, and was sharply answered, that he should not preach novelties. "I did not think," said he, raising his calm, devout countenance, and looking the Vicar-General full in the face, "I did not think, that to preach Jesus Christ was a novelty among you. I appeal to the Archbishop." If Luther, who, far off in Germany, was at that moment, perhaps, struggling in great agony with temptation, sickness, and despair, had been near when Loyola spoke those words, he would assuredly have welcomed him as a fellow-labourer.

The Archbishop of Toledo, to whom he appealed, advised him to go to Salamanca, which he accordingly did. But Satan was there before him, and no sooner did he commence teaching the people than he was once more cast into prison, where he stayed twenty-two days. As no fault could be found in him, however, by his judges, save that he preached rather too well, they were forced to set him free, though forbidding him to preach even orthodox doctrines, until he had read a course of divinity. Here again, as at Alcala, the voices of God and of the Church seemed opposed; in vain did the enthusiast try to reconcile them; obey he dared not,

and disobedience would but expose him to the dungeon again, and close his lips and his mission. But Loyola was not a Hamlet, to waste his life in trying to reconcile opposing duties. He cut the knot he could not loose, and turning his back upon Spain, in mid winter, alone,—for his disciples, too left him at this juncture,—he passed the Pyrenees in safety, through storms, and snow, and bands of robbers, and early in February, 1528, stood looking down on the tall houses and narrow streets of Paris, from the heights of Montmartre. Thirty-seven years of his life had now passed, and seven of his regenerated existence; and there he stood, alone, without a friend in the vast city below him, with but a little money, given him by some compassionate people in Barcelona, and in the character of a mere student; for his only object in Paris was to procure a proper education. Strangers from England and from Italy brushed by him as he meditated, and talked of the application which it was rumoured Henry was about to make to the Pope for a divorce from Catharine; of the reported alliance between the English king and Francis against the Emperor; of the devastation of Rome since its fall the May previous; and of the horrors of its pillage, which, after nine months' occupation by the Spaniards and Germans, had not even then ceased. Their words fell on Loyola's ear, but made no impression. His mind was filled with the single thought of becoming the spiritual regenerator of the immense multitude moving at his feet; his projected life of poverty, labor, and religious instruction became more and more clearly revealed to him; and, before he returned to the Hospital of St. James for the night, the work of the morrow, of many morrows, was determined for him. Placing the little fund he had in a companion's hands for safe keeping, he begged his bread from door to door; he pursued his study of Latin at Montaigne College; and having obtained a hold upon some young Spaniards, proceeded with them through the "Spiritual Exercises," described by him

six years before, and persuaded them to sell all they had, to give their money to the poor, and to beg with him enough to support life. But these young men had friends, who looked on all this as madness, and tried to persuade them to come back to common sense; failing in this, they seized and withdrew them by force from the company of Ignatius, and denounced him, as a dangerous seducer of youth, to Ori, the inquisitor, who ordered him to appear and explain his conduct.

But Loyola had for a time left Paris. The friend to whom he had confided his money had proved a rogue, and having spent part, had run away with the remainder. He reached Rouen, there fell sick, and was at last brought to great want and suffering. In this emergency, he wrote to Loyola, and at the moment that the inquisitor summoned the Spanish enthusiast before him as a criminal, he was toiling on his way to Rouen to aid the poor wretch who had robbed him; and before he returned to stand his trial, at the call of the representative of the dread tribunal, he had, by asking alms, obtained enough to procure the repentant wrong-doer a passage to Spain. He returned, was tried, and acquitted.

During seven years, Loyola remained in Paris. His life there was one of poverty, struggle, patient toil, and earnest study. It was the life that had been revealed to him during that first evening on Montmartre; to which hill he frequently retired for prayer and meditation. Into the details of that life we have not room to enter. To reclaim the sinful was one of his chief aims, and no suffering, no labor, deterred him from it. Having long tried to turn one from licentiousness by reason and persuasion, he at length placed himself one evening by the side of the road along which the offender was to pass, plunged to the neck in a half-frozen pond; and as the young man came near, there was heard, as from the earth, a voice picturing God's punishment for sin. Startled by such sounds in the partial darkness, the youth trembled

and stopped. "It is I," said Ignatius; and, as the terrified and conscience-stricken man crept to the water's edge and peered through the gloom at him, he continued, "And here will I suffer, O sinner, for your sins! Go, gratify your lust."

But his darling purpose was the realization of that dream which for ten years had haunted him,—the reclaiming of Palestine; and he proceeded to enlist disciples to aid him in the work. Through six long, silent years he labored, and for every year could count one convert. It was in February, 1528, that he reached Paris; in August, 1534, in the subterranean chapel of Montmartre, Ignatius, Xavier, Laynez, Salmeron, Bobadilla, Rodriguez, and Faber, bound themselves to the conversion of the infidels of Palestine, or, if they were not permitted to go thither, then to go whithersoever the Vicar of Jesus should send them.

But while, with the enthusiasm of Jesuits, they bound themselves by that memorable vow, with the calm good sense of Jesuits, also, they deferred the execution of their purpose for two years and a half, in order to complete their studies. When Loyola himself went to Spain, early in 1535, it was with the understanding that his disciples would meet him in Venice, in 1537.

This act of Ignatius, his separation from his disciples for two years, and return home after an absence of fourteen years, we regard as one of the most characteristic of his life. It shows his coolness, his confidence, his power over his companions, his justice, and his self-command, in the clearest manner. Any but a master-mind, which, after so many years of fruitless toil, found itself on the brink of apparent success, would have urged immediate action, and have watched the new converts with jealous eyes, lest they should have forgotten all the past in dreams of the future. Loyola delayed the execution of his cherished scheme, left his disciples to the snares and dangers of Paris and the world, and turned his steps

homeward, to repair, before he left Europe for ever, the wrongs of his youth in his native neighbourhood. He reached that neighbourhood, and took up his abode at a hospital in Aspeytia, near by the castle of his fathers. To that castle, however, he was asked in vain. In vain was he tempted by rich meats sent from it to his hospital; he distributed them among the poor. He preached on the open hill-side to the thousands that flocked to hear him; he founded charities; he broke up the gaming-houses: he stripped, by his eloquence, the rich ornaments of the women from their heads; and publicly asking pardon of one to whom, when young, he had done a wrong, gave him two farms as a partial compensation for what he had suffered. It was no wonder that such a man, in that age and land, was able "to do what he pleased;" and was followed, almost worshipped, as a miracle-working saint. Having in this manner bidden farewell to his birthplace, about the end of 1535 he repaired to Venice, there to await his companions.

They came, earlier than was anticipated by some weeks, on the 8th of January, 1537. This they did because of the war then raging between France and the Emperor. When they reached the place of embarkation, though they found their leader there prepared to set forward to the Holy Land, the way was barred by the contest between the Turks and Christians, which continued through that year. Loyola, we say, was ready to go forward; during the year which he had passed in Venice new views had, probably, been unfolded to him; but he had not in the least abandoned his determination to aim first at the rescue of that land where Jesus taught and died. During that year he had become acquainted, had lived and laboured, with Gianpietro Caraffa, afterwards Paul the Fourth, the chief of the Theatines, and one of the most eloquent, violent, self-willed, self-sacrificing, in short, thoroughly *Roman* Catholic, rulers by whom the Universal Mother was ever governed. From him Loyola caught something, but

not much; and even in receiving this, he refused so much more, that he made the future Pope his enemy; so openly his enemy that, when the missionaries for Palestine thought proper to ask the ruling pontiff for his blessing on their enterprise, it was judged best by Ignatius that he should not be one of those who were to ask it. That blessing, through the good offices of Peter Ortiz, who represented the injured Catharine of England at the court of Rome, was given; and those who were yet laymen having been ordained as priests, they waited for the new year to open the way to Palestine. If it was not open by the close of the year, then their vow bound them to follow the Pope's behests. They waited, not in idleness and luxury, but in hospitals, prisons, and hermit-cells. Labor and suffering, self-denial and self-sacrifice, were not words and resolutions, but acts, with those men.

But they waited in vain; the path was closed, and now another career opened before them. It was at Vicenza that Ignatius met his companions, who had been scattered through various cities on their deeds of mercy. Forty years of constant effort and exposure had matured the expression of that calm, commanding countenance, upon which not a shade of disappointment or regret could be seen, as he announced the failure of the great purpose of his life. When he bade the castle of Loyola farewell in 1522, tears stood upon his cheek; when he abandoned Palestine, his lip trembled; when tyrannized over at Alcala and Salamanca, his eye flashed fire; but years had done their work, and, in the spirit of true faith and resignation, he now pointed out to his followers the way which God had opened for them. It was not Palestine, but the whole wide world, that was to be their field; it was not the Mohammedans, but all heretics, all pagans, all sinners whom they were to convert and bring into the fold of the Saviour. As he spoke, the visions of his youth returned upon Loyola; he saw again, as at Manresa, the opposing camps of Jesus and Satan; he heard again that

voice of divine melody which had so often given him strength in his trials, and saw Mary herself smile upon him. "Brothers," he said, with the calmness of confirmed strength, "brothers, we are 'The Company of Jesus;' he is our Captain, and, battling under him, we will drive back the heretics of Germany, and carry the gospel to the farthest East, and to the new-found heathen of the West." They listened as to a prophet; they felt the presence of Jesus in the midst of them, sanctioning the words of their elder brother; they received the spirit of faith which enabled them to fulfil the prophecy.

Ignatius, Laynez, and Faber went at once to Rome, to offer the services of the Company to the Pope. The others divided themselves among the Universities of Italy, to aid the youth in the pursuit of heavenly wisdom. They bound themselves to live in hospitals, and upon alms; to receive no money; to preach with apostolic plainness; to teach children; to aid all men; and to obey one another in turn.

The chief and his two companions were received with kindness at Rome; their works had gone before them. Ignatius became the spiritual director of some aged and distinguished men; the others were appointed to teach in the University. From that time Rome became the residence of the founder of the Jesuits; sometimes in disgrace, sometimes persecuted, once tried, and through perjury almost condemned, he still labored to assist the suffering, and to perfect the outline of that order which it was now agreed should be founded by the members of the Company of Jesus. The spirit had been breathed into them at Vicenza, the form was taken at Rome; and after long examinations and debates, after prayer and fasting on the part of the comrades, and struggles to resist them on the part of those who feared all change, it was at last approved by the Holy Father on the 27th of September, 1540. In that year the cause of Luther received two wounds: the bigamy of Philip of Hesse,

half-sanctioned by the Reformers; and the foundation of the "Society of Jesus."

The order being sanctioned, a general was to be chosen, and rules or constitutions were to be formed. It could not be that any other than Loyola would be chosen general; and though he resisted the choice, it was clear that his resistance must yield. At length, on Easter day, 1541, he acquiesced in the unchanging wish of his followers. On the following Friday, this now triumphant enthusiast, who for twenty years had labored for that day, walked with his little band through the streets of Rome, visited the seven churches, received and gave the communion, took the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and bound himself and his brethren to go wherever the Pope should order, and to teach little children the Christian doctrine. To this last duty Ignatius at once devoted himself, and through forty days the church of Santa Maria de Strata was filled with curious and awe-struck listeners;—the noble, the rich, the beautiful, learned divines, and venerable teachers, were there, catching with eagerness the broken Italian of the Spanish saint, as he expounded the catechism to the children about his knees. Some sneered, but for the most part men and women wept, or smiled through their tears as they heard the heart-felt, heart-reaching accents of him who had studied divinity so profoundly in the great school of life.

Nor did the active benevolence of Loyola prove less when he possessed power, than when he was borne down by poverty and weakness. He still visited the prison, the sick-bed, and the poor man's hovel; he labored to convert the Jews, to reclaim the vicious, and to ward off danger from those yet uncorrupted. He founded institutions and asylums in pursuance of his designs; but the two great objects of his life thenceforward were, to complete the Constitutions of his Society, and to fulfil the weighty duties which devolved upon him as its first general.

The Constitutions of Loyola are worthy of deep study; they unfold his plans, and reveal his spirit. They should be investigated by every student of associated action, and in many points we believe they are worthy of imitation. Let us examine them a little. The purpose of his order was, to fight the battles of Jesus, and to conquer the enemy of Christ and man. His followers were to do this first in themselves, and then in others; remembering that every blow struck for another's salvation helped to secure their own, provided the act was done in the spirit of Christian love. To attain these two ends, self-sanctification and the good of others, Ignatius saw that there was needed less of solitary contemplation, and more of active labor and benevolence, than was to be found in the other orders of Christendom. He saw, too, that the true field for action was education, in its widest sense; and that the instruction and edification of the young especially was the best method of securing a hold upon the adult population of the world. With equal clearness he perceived the immense advantage to be gained by occupying those portions of the world which as yet lay in heathen darkness. The faith of the Western Church was truth to him; the cause of that Church was the cause of Christ; and to spread its power was to spread the power of the gospel. In farther India, in remote Peru, he would lay foundations broad and deep for the Church to rest upon securely, even when, in Europe, the earth rocked under her. With these two great instruments, the education of the young and the conversion of the heathen world, he would combine the power derived through the confessional, and the moral influence growing out of self-sacrificing charity. Aided by these, he knew his followers might preach to good purpose, and lay hold of the springs of life in their hearers. But how could men be found capable of such labors as were to be required even of the privates in that Company of Jesus? They were to be *made;* to be made at once perfectly obedient and perfectly self-sustaining.

They were not to be machines, but men; and yet men acting with the unity, the regularity, the unconsciousness, of the various parts of a machine. They were to give up every thing to the great purposes of the order, and were to pursue those purposes with the devotion due to individual ends. They were to annihilate themselves, and yet develope every faculty and taste to the utmost. They were to combine the characters of the religious recluse, the devoted missionary, the finished scholar, the polished gentleman, and the Christian man of the world; to respect no claims, to regard no rules, which interfered with the purposes of the order; for these were God's purposes, far above all other claims and human regulations.

Such was the problem before Ignatius, to make such men. He and his successors solved it; they made men who, in union, could do more for good or evil than any others the world has ever seen; and who did more good when the true purpose was in view, and more evil when a false one usurped its place. They attained success, first by choosing the right material, and rejecting every one who might begin, but could not go through the trial. Whoever entered the order was tried like the musket at the armoury, and only those who were beyond all question were kept. Secondly, he who entered the society was to abandon every thing beyond it; to hold no converse with the world, except under a superior's eye; to hate father, and mother, and all, for the sake of Jesus. Thirdly, the whole course of education for the order was calculated, like that of a military school, to secure perfect obedience,—that peculiar loss of individuality which is seen among soldiers, with whom the corps is every thing, and the man is nothing. Fourthly, exercises were contrived which caused each member to learn his own resources and rely upon them, to cultivate and know every power he possessed. The Jesuits were like an army drilled to the last degree in unity of action, and yet so that every man among them could

sustain the duties of a partizan warrior. And fifthly, the discipline which was to develope the youth into a Jesuit continued until the habits of life were fixed and hardened, not to be changed.

But Loyola saw that all must not be of one rank, or bound to the same duties. He established, therefore, four grades; first, professed fathers, bound to live by alms, and to go on missions; secondly, spiritual coadjutors, without individual property, but provided for by college revenues; these were the instructors; thirdly, the scholars, or Jesuits in the process of development; and fourthly, the temporal coadjutors, who retained their property, and assisted without recompense in the administration of the society. At the centre of this body sat the general, receiving, as through electric telegraphs, news from every quarter; a despot, whose will seemed almost omnipotent, whose eye was on every member in the farthest isles of the Indian sea, and yet who was himself watched and ruled, and who was absolute only within the prescribed circle of his power. If he went beyond that circle, he was warned; and if the warning was disregarded, he might be deposed.

Such are the outlines of those Constitutions, which, with prayer and praise, and, as he believed, under the inspiration of God, Ignatius drew up; which he submitted to the chief men of the society, and left to be approved by the first general congregation that should meet. Into the history of the order we do not propose to enter; but one remark is worthy of a place here,—that the evils of Jesuitism did not appear until the Constitutions had been practically changed, the plan of Loyola violated, and the balance of power overthrown.

Ignatius lived fifteen years at the head of the society which he had founded. He died in 1556, at the age of sixty-five. Luther had died just ten years before. In the latter portion of Loyola's life, we see a man calm and firm as Washington, ruling with the energy and the success of a narrow, but mighty mind. Obedience was his watchword; he who had

obeyed others required others to obey him, absolutely and wholly. He required not only that the conduct and will should comply, but that the mind should deem that course true and right which the superior determined to be true and right. He withstood popes, cardinals, and kings, when they came within his province, as resolutely as Luther, and with far more dignity. He would not allow his followers to receive any high office in the Church, but required devotion, entire devotion to the order they had joined. Novelties he hated and abjured; he was the man of the past, of the ages of blind faith, passive obedience, and pattern excellence; as Luther was the man of the future, of the ages of destruction, and doubt, and disobedience, and progress. Rapidly and widely Loyola saw his order spread. At his death, it existed in fourteen provinces; hundreds of its members were laboring in India, America, and Africa, and millions of souls were under its sway. In the very year that he died, it became fixed at Cologne, at Ingoldstadt, and at Prague; and the Protestants, on the field where the Reformation had triumphed, saw themselves surrounded by papal forces far different from the lazy monks whom Luther, and Erasmus, and Hutten warred against.

Then the enthusiast prepared himself to die in triumph. God had granted his prayer, had rolled back, the tide of heresy, and won new lands for Christendom. We can see him on that night of the 30th of July, when all had left him, and when, filled with the conviction that his end was close at hand, he bent for the last time before his Maker, giving thanks for the victory which Jesus had secured to his faithful soldiers. And as he looked back and scanned the life of which he was so soon to give an account, his idle youth, his laborious manhood, his successful old age, did Ignatius find himself a hypocrite? Never, we believe, did a man's heart acquit him more entirely of that crime than did Loyola's. He saw his folly, his waste of time, his ill-directed en-

thusiasm; but he knew that he had sincerely, heartily, laboriously, striven to advance the cause of the Church; and as the body failed, and the remembrance of that other death-night in the ancestral castle, when Peter had appeared to him, rose upon his soul, the calm, stern old man became a visionary youth again. The mountains of his boyhood rose about him; the pebbly brooks he had sat by, reading romances, again gurgled in his ear. The unknown maiden, to whose service he had mentally devoted himself, came by upon her palfrey; his heart was yet young, and far purer than when Peter healed him by a touch. Then, death stood by him, a dreaded and ghastly form from below; now, it was an angel stooping from above to receive him. In his excited mind, the bubbling brook, the maiden's laugh, changed to the hymns of blessed spirits; and the form of his early lady-love became that of his true Mistress, before whose altar he had hung up his sword.

Day broke over the Eternal City. It was scarce sunrise, when the fathers came to visit their superior. The colour had left his lips, his pulse just moved, but his eye was calm and full of light. They put cordials to his mouth, but he would not taste them. They would have sent for the physicians; but he, by gesture, forbade them. They knelt by his bed-side, they heard the death-rattle, and they marked the life leaving the eye. One word his faint lips fashioned, and faintly it echoed through the room, as if spirits had repeated it; it was the name of his Great Captain, "Jesus;" before the echo ceased, Ignatius Loyola had passed to another world.

What, then, was this man? He was one based upon sincerity, above all things; narrow and stationary, fanciful and fanatical, a deep faith still worked in every thing he did and wrote. He was not a man of vast intellect, but of vast energy and courage, and who, without convincing men, obliged them to yield by force of will and nerve of character. His institu-

tion was not the result of long meditation and profound ambition, but sprang from circumstances, from the inability of the Companions to reach Palestine, and the experience of their leader during that winter in Venice spent with Caraffa. Its success came from the sincerity of the men who formed it. Less true and devoted, they would have received the honors of the Church; they would have refused such utter devotion to their order; they would have rebelled against the despotic power of the general.

The Constitutions of the Jesuits were less the result of the wisdom of thought, than of the wisdom of devotedness. Laynez was a man of thought, and did much toward perfecting the Constitutions; but their great features were from the soldier Ignatius. The truth of this view will be seen in the history of the order; for when selfishness took the place of self-sacrifice, the Constitutions were changed, the general was stripped of power, and the order was forgotten by its members, as it no longer served to forward their individual ends; the honors of the Church were received, worldliness took the place of sincerity, and Jesuitism was without power.

Lastly, Loyola was a conservative, attached to the past. Forms he was ready enough to violate; but the substance of old things, the excellencies of the middle time, he clung to with desperation; and lest he should lose them, he clung also to its follies and its evils. He was a man of one idea, and this idea was, like that of Hildebrand, to bring all things, temporal and spiritual, physical and intellectual, into submission to the will of God, and to the Roman Church. This design may be ascribed to ambition; but look at the life of Loyola up to the year 1538, and where are there plans which show ambition? Yet he had then been laboring sixteen years. And what shall we say of the institution which he founded? The end proposed was one of the highest which man can entertain; for what can be higher than the sanctification of the human race and the spread of Chris-

tianity? Though we think Loyola's Christianity was but gross superstition, this judgment cannot affect our estimate of his design. It may be said, also, that the means proposed for gaining the end were admirable, for their efficiency has been attested by their success.

And what may be done by Protestants in this country to stop the growth of Jesuitism? Shall they try to preach or write it down? To vote or burn it down will hardly be openly advocated as the true method. To us the proper course seems to be this; to found better schools, and to seek out more self-sacrificing laborers, more earnest missionaries, more persuasive preachers. Let Protestantism quit scolding, and live out a better Christianity than Romanism and Jesuitism, and these latter cannot succeed. But if they form the church militant, while Protestantism continues to be the only church termagant, the power and the growth will be theirs.

BLAISE PASCAL,

AND HIS WRITINGS.*

GREAT precocity of genius, however developed or employed, seldom fails to excite at least as much alarm and pity as admiration in the judicious spectator. If not in itself a token of disease already formed, and working as a stimulus on the brain, it is sure to lead quickly to some morbid action of the physical frame, and ere long to dry up the fountains of life. The skilful horticulturist, by a forcing process, can compel the branch of a tree to make a premature and excessive display of fruit; but at the end of the year the limb is sure to perish. The energies of mind are equally exhausted, when compelled to yield their harvest out of season. The great law of compensation, which we find, on close scrutiny, to obtain everywhere in the scheme of Providence respecting mankind, under the glaring inequalities which appear on a superficial view, applies in a much greater degree than we are apt to imagine to the powers of the intellect. It seems as if only a given amount of work can be done. If more is

* *Lettres écrites à un Provincial*, par BLAISE PASCAL. *Précédées d'un Eloge de Pascal*, par M. BORDAS DEMOULIN. Paris: Librairie de Firmin Didot, Frères. 1842. 12mo. pp. 395.

Pensées de Pascal, précédées de sa Vie, par, MADAME PERIER. sa Sœur. Paris: Firmin Didot. 1842. 12mo. pp. 504.

accomplished at an early period, a shorter term of life remains for further achievements. So firmly is this truth established by uniform observation, that a note of lamentation, a mournful presentiment, always mingles with the admiring applause which greets every new and wonderful effort of a youthful prodigy. We mourn that this early excellence should be purchased at so high a price,—that premature strength and beauty of mind should be doomed to premature decay.

Blaise Pascal, the boy Euclid, the contemporary and peer of Torricelli, Huygens, and Descartes, the scourge of the Jesuits, the boast of the Port Royal school of theologians and philosophers, the earliest writer of correct and elegant French prose, the master in eloquence of Bossuet, and the object of the unwilling homage even of Voltaire, died at the age of thirty-nine. All his important writings, except the "Thoughts," which was a posthumous publication, appeared several years before his death; and his most valuable contributions to science were made before he was thirty. As a boy, he seemed miraculously endowed, and the abundant promise of his youth was fully sustained by the rich fruit of his early manhood. Bodily weakness and suffering, to which he was a lifelong martyr, far from impairing, seemed only to heighten the preternatural acuteness and strength of his intellect, as a hectic flush improves the beauty and expressiveness of the features. All that he accomplished in science and philosophy, great as was its intrinsic value, only leaves the impression that he had much in reserve. His discoveries and inventions are rather the indications, than the full fruits, of the vigor and comprehensiveness of his genius. They showed what he might have done, if his ambition had been greater, or if it had not been so early checked and turned into a different channel by religious enthusiasm. One of the most remarkable of his scientific labors, his solution of certain problems relating to the cycloid, a task which had

been proposed to all the geometers of Europe as a trial of strength, and which they had failed to accomplish, was executed by him as a diversion, during the weary and sleepless hours entailed upon him by wasting disease, that confined him to his couch, and made him incapable of holding a pen. As he had renounced science for a long time, the demonstrations remained for many days floating in his memory, before he even thought of committing them to paper. This he finally did at the solicitation of a friend, and performed the whole work of preparing them for the press in eight days. This effort established his reputation as the first geometer of his time; but the fame thus acquired was only another garland to be thrown on the tomb to which he was hastening. He heeded it not; for religious exercises now absorbed his whole attention, and the immortal "Thoughts," the ablest and most eloquent apology for Christianity ever published in France, were the sole occupation of his dying hours.

No full and satisfactory account of his life and works has ever appeared. There are eulogies upon him, in plenty, but they give only a meagre and fragmentary view of his labors, and supply few materials for a complete portrait of his character and genius. The memoir of him by his sister, Madam Perier, who shared the fervor of his religious feelings, is short, and gives us little more than a record of his bodily sufferings, and illustrations of the remarkable purity, generosity, severity of principle, and self-devotion, which characterized his whole life. We must make allowance for the bias of sisterly affection and pride; but there is no cause to doubt the honest simplicity of the writer's intentions, and the anecdotes which she relates are authentic and interesting. Later authors among his countrymen, though they have added but few facts to his biography, have done full justice to his scientific merits, have celebrated his wit, his acuteness, and his eloquence, and have paid a willing tribute of admiration to the unequalled vigor, terseness, and purity of his

style. But they have not fully appreciated his depth of thought and originality in speculation, his reasoning power, his sharp observation of human nature, or the consecration of all the traits of his genius by the most fervid piety. His current reputation as a philosophical thinker and eloquent advocate of religion, will be more increased than diminished by the most rigid examination of his works.

Blaise Pascal was born in the summer of 1623, at Clermont, the capital of the province of Auvergne, in France. His father, Etienne Pascal, who had himself attained considerable reputation as a man of science and letters, superintended the education of his only son with rare devotion and judgment. That he might obtain greater facilities for instruction, he gave up the office which he had held at Clermont, and came to reside in Paris when Blaise was but eight years old. As the mother had died five years before, the boy was entirely dependant on paternal aid; and the signs which he had already given of extraordinary natural endowments were enough to determine the father not to enter him at any college, but to take the whole task of his education on himself. So precious, though so frail, a gift of Providence, the delicacy of his bodily constitution being already apparent, was not lightly to be intrusted to the hands of strangers.

The eager curiosity of the boy, fostered by his clear and quick perception of things, was not to be satisfied with the narrow range of studies at first alloted to him in consideration for his health. His father was wont to converse freely with him in answering his inquiries about the causes of phenomena that attracted his notice; and thus, without knowing it, probably stimulated his mind more than if he had allowed him to study the same subjects in books. To the young, oral instruction is vastly more exciting and effective than the most judicious selection of reading and exercises for the memory. The intention of the elder Pascal was, that his son should study only the languages during his tender years, with

a view to cultivate the memory and the taste, while the more manly and exacting pursuits of mathematical and physical science were to be the employment of his early manhood. This wise scheme was frustrated by circumstances and the precocity of the child's genius.

The elder Pascal belonged to a small association of scientific men, among whom were Mersenne, Roberval, Le Pailleur, and Carcavi, who came together occasionally, in an informal way, to discuss new inventions and discoveries, and who kept up a correspondence with persons in the provinces and in foreign countries, who were interested in the same pursuits. They met in turn at the houses of the several members, and were united as much by personal regard as by the similarity of their tastes and occupations. The Academy of Sciences, which was established in 1666, was formed out of this society. Young Pascal was usually present at the meetings when they were held at his father's house, and the conversations which he heard probably stimulated his curiosity the more from the very fact that he was not allowed to study the subjects of the debate in books. When he was but twelve years old, his sister tells us, he wrote a short treatise upon sounds, in which he endeavoured to show why a plate, after it had been struck by a knife, immediately ceased ringing if it was touched by the hand. He was eager to know the nature of geometry, of which he had often heard the associates speak. His father told him generally, that it related to the measurement of bodies, and showed how to construct figures with accuracy, and to ascertain their relations to each other. More information was refused; but a promise was given, that he should study the subject after he had learned enough Latin and Greek. The importunate curiosity of the boy could not tolerate this delay. During his leisure hours he shut himself up in a chamber, and with a piece of charcoal traced figures upon the floor, such as parallelograms, triangles, and circles, seeking to find their

relative dimensions. He knew not even the names of these figures, but called a circle a *round*, and a line a *bar*. Definitions and axioms he framed to suit himself, and in this way proceeded by degrees, as we are told, till he came to a knowledge of the thirty-second proposition of Euclid, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. While thus engaged he was one day surprised by his father, who was naturally amazed at the progress made under such circumstances, and ran immediately to communicate the fact to his intimate friend, Le Pailleur. After this discovery no further restraint was put upon the boy's genius. Euclid's "Elements" were given to him, and he read the book by himself, without asking any aid, before he was thirteen years old.

This account is given by the elder sister, who was in the family at the time, and must have known the facts; and, as her character does not allow her veracity to be questioned, there seems no room to doubt its substantial accuracy. It was published, also, when some of the associates of the elder Pascal were still alive, who could have refuted any misstatement. Yet the story seems so marvellous, that many have considered it a mere fable. The only part of the statement that is really incredible, however, is the explanation of the process, or method, by which the boy arrived at such astonishing results. The order in which geometry is taught in the books is surely the very reverse of that in which the great truths of this science were first discovered. Instead of beginning with axioms and definitions, and advancing through the more simple propositions to the more complex, the process must have begun with the discovery, either by accident or measurement, of some advanced theorem, and, in seeking to demonstrate this, subsidiary truths came to light as the media of proof. Pythagoras certainly was acquainted with the famous proposition about the square of the hypothenuse, before he was able to demonstrate it. Euclid

teaches the elements synthetically; he discovered them by analysis. Now, if we suppose that Pascal, in the scientific meetings at his father's house, had overheard mention of the fact that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, and endeavoured to discover the proof of this theorem, the story ceases to be incredible, or even very remarkable. If we consider the astonishing acuteness and vigor of his mind, as subsequently displayed in other ways, it seems quite probable, that he succeeded in inscribing a triangle in a circle, and in ascertaining that an angle at the centre is twice as great as one at the circumference standing upon the same arc, whence the passage to the truth he was seeking to demonstrate is obvious. He may have found out more or less than this; the account on which we rely being quite indefinite as to the particulars of his achievement. The only thing really marvellous about it is, that a boy twelve years of age, without advice or instigation, should have troubled himself at all about the matter.

His aptitude for mathematical investigations soon appeared in a manner that admits no doubt nor cavil. He now took an active share in the discussions that were held by his father with his scientific associates, and, when he was but sixteen years old, he composed a short treatise on conic sections, which was considered as a prodigy of genius. It was published in 1640, and astonished Descartes himself, who persisted in maintaining that it was the work of Pascal's instructors, as he could not believe it was the production of a child. But the progress of his studies was now interrupted by domestic misfortunes. His father incurred the resentment of Richelieu, by offering some opposition to an arbitrary plan for cutting short the income attached to the Hôtel de Ville. An order was made out for committing him to the Bastille; but, obtaining seasonable notice of it, he fled from Paris, and concealed himself in his native province of Auvergne. A singular circumstance aided the talents and filial piety of his

children, to which he was at last indebted for restoration from exile. The cardinal, it is well known, had a passion for dramatic performances, and even wrote a play himself, which was quite bad enough to be worthy of a prime-minister. He took a fancy about this time that a tragi-comedy by Scudéri, called "L'Amour Tyrannique," should be represented in his presence by a party of young girls. The Duchess d'Aiguillon, who had charge of the affair, selected Jacqueline Pascal, then about thirteen years old, the younger sister of Blaise, to be one of the performers. The permission of the elder sister, afterwards Madame Perier, who was the head of the family during the absence of the father, was asked; but she coldly answered, that they did not consider themselves under any great obligation at that time to please the cardinal. The duchess persisted in her request, and hinted that the pardon of the father might reward them for compliance. They yielded to this suggestion, and the representation took place on the 3rd of April, 1639. Jacqueline acted her part like a little fairy, and her grace and spirit quite captivated the spectators, and excited all the good feelings of Richelieu. It had been arranged that the little actress should approach the minister at the close of the piece, and recite some verses pleading for the restoration of her father. She did so with a degree of simplicity and earnestness that delighted the cardinal, who embraced her as soon as she had finished, and exclaimed, "Yes, my child, I grant all that you ask for; write to your father, that he may immediately return with safety." The kind duchess then spoke with strong commendation of the merits of the family, and added, pointing to Blaise, who was standing near, "There is the son, who is but fifteen years old, and is already a distinguished mathematician."

The elder Pascal returned to Paris, and was received with great kindness by Richelieu, who soon afterwards appointed him to an honorable and lucrative office in the government of

Rouen. He removed his family to that city, and the numerous accounts and calculations that were necessary in his official business were confided to his son. Weary of the prolix and monotonous processes of arithmetic, the young man endeavoured to invent some mechanical means of executing the work. After two years of intense application, he produced the celebrated arithmetical machine which bears his name. It was a marvellous effort for a boy of nineteen. Leibnitz speaks of it with admiration, and made some attempts to improve it; and in our own day the magnificent project of Mr. Babbage, which seems fated never to be anything more than a project, is a mere revival and amplification of the ingenious contrivance of the young Frenchman. Pascal's machine consists of a kind of framework, supporting several parallel bars, which turn on their axes, each one having two series of numbers inscribed upon it. A combination of wheels and pinions behind directs the revolution of these bars, and after the machine is set for a particular process, the numbers forming the result appear through the opening in the face of the instrument. The complexity of the work prevents us from giving a more detailed description of it. It is enough to say, that it executes all the lower processes of arithmetic with quickness and certainty, and performs some of the more complex and difficult operations. The arithmetical triangle, invented by Pascal in 1654, is a natural complement to this machine. It gives the coefficients of a binomial raised to any power denoted by an integer, so that it is in part an anticipation of Newton's beautiful theorem. It was applied, also, to the theories of combinations and probabilities, facilitating the calculations in each, and indicating certain results in them not before known.

Pascal was proud of these inventions, and with good reason, considering their fertility and the originality of the ideas on which they rest. He says, that the operation of his machine resembles, far more than the instinct of animals, the workings

of the human intellect. In 1650, he sent one of the instruments to Queen Christina of Sweden, with a letter which is a perfect masterpiece of tact and delicacy in complimentary address, and shows that the writer was not more a man of science than an accomplished French gentleman. But the cost of the machine, and its liability to get out of repair, prevented it from coming into extensive use; and the invention of logarithms renders all contrivances of this class in a great degree unnecessary. In speaking of the mechanical skill of Pascal, his biographers uniformly attribute to him the invention of the wheel sedan-chair and the truck, though it is difficult to believe that these simple instruments were not in use long before his time. He probably made some marked improvements in the common mode of constructing them. The intense and continued exercise of his mind, during two years, upon his arithmetical contrivance proved a permanent injury to his physical constitution, which was naturally frail and sensitive; and ever after this period he suffered under the complication of maladies which finally caused his death.

It would be tedious to dwell upon the history of Pascal's discoveries in mathematical science. They were conspicuous and important enough to attract the attention and envy of Descartes, who seemed to arrogate to himself at this period the whole province of pure mathematics as his particular domain. The researches upon the theory of the cycloid have been already mentioned; inferior as they are to the results since obtained so easily by the use of the infinitesimal calculus, they must be regarded as almost miraculous achievements of the geometry of Pascal's time. The calculation of chances, various problems in which are so complex and far-reaching as to tax the utmost resources of the improved science of our own day, owes its earliest development, and the establishment of some of its most important principles, to the genius of this youthful mathematician. Huygens, to whom the praise of

originating the true theory of games of chance is sometimes awarded, frankly avows, in the preface to his work on this subject, that the invention does not belong to him, as "all these questions have already been discussed by the greatest geometers of France." In truth, the work of Huygens appeared in 1657, while the solutions of Pascal were well known in 1654, when he was but thirty-one years of age. The subject was proposed to him by a celebrated gamester, who wished to know in what proportions the stake should be divided between two players, if they agreed to separate without finishing the game. Pascal solved the problem in its most general form, so as to divide the sum equitably among any number of players who might be engaged. Roberval and Fermat, two of the most distinguished mathematicians in France, attempted to answer these questions at the same time; the former failed entirely; the latter succeeded by applying the theory of combinations. Pascal, who had solved the problem by another method, believed at first that the solution by Fermat was not correct, although the result agreed with his own; but on further examination he retracted this opinion, and acknowledged that the process was equally accurate and elegant.

Passing over Pascal's other mathematical labors, though many of them are of considerable note, we come to his contributions to physical science, which afford still more remarkable proofs of the premature vigor of his intellect. His celebrated experiments upon the weight of the atmosphere put the seal of demonstration upon one of the greatest discoveries of modern times. Torricelli suspected that the ascent of water in a common pump, which had hitherto been attributed to nature's repugnance to a vacuum, was really due to the weight of a column of air, which balanced the column of fluid. The workmen of the duke of Florence had informed him, that the pump would not act for a height of more than thirty-three feet. If the weight of the atmosphere,

then, would support a column of water thirty-three feet high, it would balance a much heavier fluid only at a much lower elevation. Torricelli took a glass tube about three feet long, sealed at one end, and having filled it with quicksilver, he plunged the open end into a cup full of the same fluid, and found that the mercury in the tube, after some oscillations, remained at the height of about thirty inches above the surface of the mercury in the cup. Mercury is about thirteen times heavier than water, and thirty inches is about the thirteenth part of thirty-three feet. In other words, the power which supported the two fluids, whatever it might be, was constant in respect to weight, since the elevation of the two fluids was inversely proportional to their weight. Torricelli believed that this power was the pressure of the air, or that a column of air as high as the earth's atmosphere was as heavy as thirty inches of mercury, or as thirty-three feet of water. But he could not prove this; his supposition, it is true, explained the facts; but it did not exclude other hypotheses which might be framed to account for the same phenomena. The question remained open, then, till, in the language of Bacon, an *experimentum crucis* could be devised, which should eliminate the false theories, and show that the weight of the atmosphere was *the only possible* cause of the phenomenon. This experiment was at last devised and executed by Pascal, who thereby put the question for ever at rest.

The experiment of Torricelli, which was, in truth, the invention of the barometer, was made in 1645. Its result had been predicted by Descartes; but the explanation offered by both these philosophers had at first but small success among the learned. The doctrine of the repugnance of nature to a vacuum had been too long established to give way readily to a truth which was not as yet demonstrated. The supposition was gravely made, that some *subtile matter*, or *ether*, evaporated from the surface of the water or the

mercury, and filled the apparent void in the top of the tube. Pascal at once adopted the views of Torricelli and Descartes, and repeated the experiments of the former in 1646, with some variations, which still further discredited the old doctrine. He used tubes of great length, and thus proved that nature did not dread a great vacuum any more than a small one. He employed a tube bent in the form of the letter U, and having invented an apparatus for admitting at intervals small quantities of air into the top of one of the branches, he found that the mercury descended there just as fast as the air was admitted, while it remained stationary in the other branch. The results of these experiments, and the arguments founded upon them, he published in 1647, in a little book, entitled "New Experiments respecting a Vacuum." Noel, a Jesuit, who was then rector of the College of Paris, published a severe criticism upon this work, and Pascal replied in a sarcastic and argumentative way, showing the power in controversy which was afterwards more fully developed in the "Provincial Letters."

But Pascal saw with pain, that not one of the tests or arguments hitherto employed was absolutely decisive of the point at issue. After long and painful reflection upon the subject, he at last matured the idea of an experiment, which would leave no room for cavil, and would establish the true doctrine irrevocably. If the air be a weighty fluid, each horizontal stratum of it must be pressed by the accumulated weight of all the superincumbent strata, and the pressure must therefore diminish as we rise above the surface of the earth. Now, if it be the pressure of the air which sustains the column of fluid, let the instrument be carried to a considerable height in the atmosphere, and the mercury must fall to a lower point in the tube. In order that the difference in the height of the mercury might be very perceptible, and leave no pretext to doubt its reality, it was necessary to raise the tube very high in the air. The mountain called the Puy-

de-Dôme, which is in the neighbourhood of Clermont, and is about three thousand feet high, offered a suitable means for accomplishing this object. On the 15th of November, 1647, Pascal communicated his project to his brother-in-law, M. Perier, who was about to visit Clermont, and charged him to make the trial as soon as he arrived there. Various circumstances delayed the execution of the plan; but it was tried at last, with all possible exactness, on the 19th of September, 1648, and all the phenomena were observed which Pascal had predicted. The mercury began to descend in the tube as they climbed the mountain's side, and on the summit it was more than three inches lower than it had been at the base. As they descended, the column rose again, till they reached the plain, where it had the same elevation as at first. In another tube, which had been observed meanwhile on the plain, no alteration had taken place. Pascal made similar experiments at Paris, by means of the very lofty tower of St. Jacques-la-Boucherie, and obtained corresponding results.

Herschel, quoted with approbation by Mr. Hallam, calls this famous experiment "a *crucial instance*, one of the first, if not the very first, on record in physics." Indeed, the whole history of Pascal's investigations respecting the pressure of the atmosphere is such a striking and beautiful illustration of the Baconian system, that we must believe he had studied the "Novum Organum," an edition of which was printed in Holland in 1645, just a year before Pascal began his work. His final success appears the more remarkable, when we consider that he was not yet twenty-five years old. Descartes, with his usual selfishness and arrogance, claimed the merit of this experiment for himself, by affirming, in a letter written in 1649, that he had suggested it to Pascal two years before. This assertion was communicated to the latter, who disdained to take any direct notice of it; but in a historical account of the matter, which he wrote in 1651, he says, without mentioning Descartes, "I boldly declare

that this experiment is of my own invention; and I say, moreover, that the increase of knowledge which it has occasioned is due entirely to me." If we reflect on the severe integrity of Pascal's conduct, the rigid conscientiousness which pervaded his character, and the frank and manly way in which he acknowledges the merit due to others, evinced particularly by his language respecting Torricelli, it seems impossible to discredit this distinct assertion. "The question is one of those," says Playfair, "where a man's conduct in a particular case can only be rightly interpreted from his general character and behaviour. It is notorious, that Descartes was far from being frank and candid in his intercourse with others. He contrives to give a history of the origin of the telescope without mentioning Galileo; he says nothing of the discoveries of Kepler, though so nearly connected with his own; and his conduct towards Snellius subjects his integrity to the heaviest imputations. "The truth is," says Playfair, "that he appears throughout a jealous and suspicious man, always inclined to depress or conceal the merit of others." Surely, when a question of veracity arises between two such persons as Pascal and Descartes, we cannot doubt for a moment which is to be believed.

The experiments upon the pressure of the atmosphere naturally led Pascal to some more general inquiries respecting the equilibrium of fluids. He wrote two treatises upon this subject and upon the weight of the air, which were finished in 1653, though they were not published till after his death. They contain the record of some ingenious experiments, and many general views, which were considerably in advance of the science of his time. He remarks, that the air is a compressible and elastic fluid, and cites, as a proof of this, a trial which he had caused to be made on the Puy-de-Dôme, where a balloon partly filled with air at the base, on being carried to the summit, was entirely distended; it shrunk again as the party descended the mountains, and regained its

former volume at the foot. He made some observations, also, on the changes to which the column of mercury is exposed, while kept at the same place, proceeding from the variations of the weather. He did not, indeed, divine all the barometrical uses of this instrument, though he seems to have accomplished more in this way than any one of his contemporaries.

If we except the mathematical inquiry respecting the cycloid, which was taken up rather as a diversion during his last illness, it may be said, that Pascal's scientific labors terminated when he had attained the age of thirty. It is not surprising, then, that their results should hardly appear so numerous and brilliant as those obtained by one or two of his illustrious contemporaries in an age which was the most remarkable, perhaps, for the progress of science and the development of the human mind, of any in the history of the world. But as indications of what he might have done in a longer period, or under more favourable circumstances, —as evidence of the vast power and fertility of his youthful intellect, they will never cease to command the wonder and admiration of mankind. If his life had been protracted to the ordinary limit, if suffering and disease had not perpetually discouraged him, if his ambition had been greater, or if it had not been so early checked and turned into a different channel, we can hardly doubt that he would have stood among the foremost of the great promoters of science in modern times.

The father of Pascal died in 1651; and two years afterwards, his sister Jacqueline, to whom he was tenderly attached, retired for ever from the world, by uniting herself to the company of pious recluses at Port Royal. Anxious to show the fervor of her religious faith, and her grateful feelings towards the brother who had first directed her own steps to the path of peace, she sought to win him also from the world, by causing him to renounce his former studies, and to seek only for the things of heaven. Various circumstances aided the execution of this pious scheme. An attack of

paralysis, several years before, had nearly deprived him of the use of his legs, and diseases of the nervous system and the stomach had now brought him to the verge of the grave. There was no course left for him but to abandon his engrossing labors, at least for a season, to turn his thoughts to other subjects, and patiently to await either the partial restoration of his health, or a final release from earthly suffering. During the tedious hours of illness, his mind reverted to the religious counsels he had received in his youth. His father had carefully sown in his mind the seeds of piety and Christian faith. These had remained quiet, though not wholly inoperative, during his early manhood, while the whole force of his intellect was directed to scientific pursuits. But they sprang up with a most luxuriant growth, when these pursuits were forcibly interrupted for a time by physical suffering. The objects for which he had hitherto labored so strenuously now lost all value in his eyes. The memory of youthful triumphs was no longer pleasant; the reputation he had already gained, the hopes of still greater distinction which he had once cherished, were now ranked among the vain joys and aspirations of a world which seemed to be fading from his sight, as another one of more glorious promise opened to his view from beyond the grave. He resolved to mortify his ambition and love of science, to quench even the natural spark of family affection, to deny himself the ordinary comforts of life, and to devote his whole soul to the contemplation of God and a future life. He became a recluse, an ascetic, an enthusiast; we will not say a fanatic, for his cruelties were lavished only on himself. The end was not yet; a few more years remained to him, during which his achievements in defence of persecuted innocence and religious truth were destined to surpass in splendour his early contributions to the cause of human learning.

During the extremity of bodily pain, this change of purpose wrought so powerfully on his mind, that at one time

he was probably on the brink of insanity. As he slowly and imperfectly recovered, the intensity of feeling subsided in some degree, but was revived and made permanent by the consequences of an accident. As he was crossing the Pont de Neuilly in a carriage, the horses became restive and unmanageable, and at a point where there was no railing to the bridge, they leaped into the river. Fortunately, the traces broke, and the carriage stopped on the brink; but the frail system of Pascal received a shock so violent, that he fainted, and was with great difficulty restored to consciousness. The alarm and the jar of the head which were thus caused had a sensible effect on his excited imagination, and he became subject to a kind of false sensation not uncommon in certain forms of mental disease. He saw a frightful precipice yawning continually at his side, and though his reason convinced him that it was unreal, he could not resist the terror which it occasioned. We find indistinct notices of a sort of vision, or ecstacy, which he had soon afterwards, and which was attributed to the same cause. As a memorial of this vision, he preserved for a long time a paper on which were written the day and the hour when it occurred, and some detached pious meditations; and this paper he constantly carried about with him, as if it were an amulet, concealed within the lining of his dress. It is difficult to say, whether this was an effect of partial insanity, or of some superstitious idea which he had connected with the vision. At any rate, he considered the accident on the bridge as a warning given to him by Heaven to break off all human engagements, and to live in future for God alone. It is painful to read the minute account given by his sister of the privations and suffering imposed upon himself by this unhappy enthusiast, during the remainder of his life. Great as these austerities were, they never altered the sweetness of his disposition, nor impaired the astonishing vigor and acuteness of his intellect, whenever he had occasion to use his pen in the cause of truth.

Pascal now became an intimate friend of the most distinguished Port Royalists, and though he never formally united himself to their society, he was accustomed to make them long visits, and was led to espouse their doctrines, and to take an active share in the controversies in which they were then engaged. Among the more eminent of their number, to whom he became particularly attached,—similarity in taste, opinion, and ardor of devotional feeling being the bond of union between them,—were Arnauld, Nicole, De Saci, and Lancelot. Of the remarkable association, of which these men were the brightest ornaments, and which was at once the glory and the shame of France during the seventeenth century, our limits will not permit us to speak at length; but some notice of it is necessary, in order to make intelligible the history of the bitter controversy it waged with the Jesuits, when the genius of Pascal came to its rescue at the hour of its greatest need, and delayed for many years its destruction by the hands of its powerful and bitter antagonists.

The effects of the Reformation were hardly more conspicuous upon the feelings and conduct of those who separated from the church of Rome, than of those who remained within its pale.' Fiercely assaulted from all quarters, the ancient Mother found greater resources in her own bosom than she had ever counted upon in her hour of prosperity. Opposition developed her strength; shame and rivalry purified her morals and reduced the number of her corruptions; and the piety of many of her faithful children kindled into a brighter and purer flame, as they looked round for means of defence against the enthusiastic and unrelenting Reformers. The forces thus engendered, created by various causes, and advancing at times in opposite directions, often came in contact with each other, and excited dissensions in her own bosom; but they all strengthened her hands against the common foe. Having this great advantage over the Reformers, of being all

subject to one head, to whom they professed implicit obedience, the Catholics profited by these dissensions, from the increase of zeal and effort which they occasioned; while the controversy was stayed by the papal power, when it had gone so far as to threaten the internal security of the Church. The able and wary pontiffs, whom the exigency of the times called to the papal chair, as successors to the profligate Alexander and the luxurious Leo, managed these disputes with admirable discretion, though with less regard to consistency and purity of doctrine than to the protection of the common cause against its avowed enemies. They temporized between the opposing parties, delaying as much as possible the absolute decision of the matter, and finally caused that scale to preponderate on which the temporal interests of the Church seemed most intimately to depend. The fanaticism of a Spanish soldier, turned monk, created the order of the Jesuits, the most effective militia ever organized for the purposes of ecclesiastical warfare; resolute, cunning, and unscrupulous, they sacrificed the cause of Christian faith and morals to the necessities of the combat in which they were engaged. Fervor of devotional feeling, kindled by the exciting religious controversies which then agitated Europe, gave birth, among other sects, to that of the Port Royalists, or Jansenists, of France, composed of persons who still adhered with unflinching fidelity to the see of Rome, though in practice, and in many points of doctrine, they were more nearly allied to some parties among the Reformers. Two associations, animated by principles differing so widely from each other as those of the Jesuits and the Jansenists, could not long coexist in harmony within the same pale. Disputes on points of faith were carried on with bitter recriminations; and the contest proceeded so far, that the entire destruction of one or the other party at last became inevitable. Rome temporized as usual, but was obliged to act at last; and the suppression of the monastery of Port Royal, and the persecution of the

Jansenists, showed how highly she valued the unscrupulous services of the followers of Loyola.

The controversy, so far as it was exclusively doctrinal, turned on the dark problems of predestination, free will, and saving grace, which have been almost constantly agitated in the Church during its whole history, and are still as far from a satisfactory solution as ever. The pious enthusiasm of the Jansenists, leading them to confess their utter unworthiness in the sight of God, and their total incapacity to execute the divine commands, caused them to accept in all its severity the gloomy doctrine of St. Augustine. They held, that the grace of God is free and irresistible; it is conferred upon the elect, not in consideration of their own merits, but by arbitrary appointment; they cannot obtain it by their own acts, nor resist its effects whenever it is vouchsafed to them. Man is born with so strong an inclination to sin, that without extraordinary aid from the Deity, he cannot perform a pious act. The human will is absolutely passive; so that a good action, even after conversion, cannot be ascribed in any proper sense to the human agent, but is due to the operation of the Spirit. It is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do; and there has been no free will for the creature since Adam's time, except to do evil. It is not denied, that all men may be converted, *if they wish* for conversion; but they never can wish for it, unless the grace of God is imparted to them for that end.

Appalling as this doctrine seems, when nakedly stated, it had belonged to the faith of the Christian world at least since the time of Augustine. The church of Rome had held it in reverence for the authority of that father; and the early Reformers, Luther and Calvin especially, state it without reserve, and engage in its defence with the utmost warmth. The former declares, that good and evil are attributable to God alone; man commits sin from the necessary inclination of his will, which is enslaved to wickedness, being predeter-

mined to it by divine power; and when he inclines to good, he only follows the irresistible impulse of grace, which pushes him onward like an inanimate body, his own agency having no share whatever in the movement. This is the doctrine, certainly, of men who have made entire submission of their reason to their faith, and as such it was accepted and defended by the Jansenists, and their eloquent champion, Pascal. It is a part of that sacrifice which the penitent convert makes to the cause of religious truth, to humble the pride of his own intellect, and, in all the enthusiasm of self-abasement, to accept propositions as dark as these without question or reserve.

The Jesuits wished to impose no such terrible burden on their converts. Their object was to retain waverers in the Church, and to allure heretics again into its bosom, by imposing upon them no austerities of conduct, and no stumbling-blocks of doctrine. Lax and unscrupulous in the use of means, they preached a convenient system of morals, and an easy creed, to their converts. They aimed rather to justify sin than to commend holiness; for they looked only to the external interests of the Church, which was already sure of the saints, and now stood in need, as they thought, of the services of the sinners. More subtile and ingenious than profound, they contrived intermediate systems wherewith to reconcile their own loose doctrines with the often repeated declarations of the Church and the teachings of the fathers. The treatise of the Spanish Jesuit, Molina, published in 1588, on the agreement between divine grace and human free-will, may be considered as the most general exposition of their belief on this thorny subject. According to this theory, the Deity foreknows not only every event which will actually take place, but also what would have happened under certain conditions, that in fact are never fulfilled. The necessary aid of the spirit is imparted to those only who would have made good use of the freedom of the will, if they had possessed it.

Consequently men act from necessity; but also act precisely as they would have done, had they been free. Divine grace is freely imparted to those who do not, indeed, merit it, but whose characters show a certain congruousness or fitness for its reception. This is the celebrated system of the "intermediate science," or the foresight of "contingent futures," as well as of actual events; and of "congruousness," instead of *merit*, or *arbitrary appointment*, which is made the law of distribution of the divine assistance. It is evidently an ingenious attempt to inculcate the doctrine of Pelagius, without expressly contradicting the words of Augustine. The doctrine of predestination is retained; but all events, so far as man is concerned, take place exactly as if they were altogether contingent, or dependent only on the free action of the human will. The just are irresistibly inclined to holiness by the action of divine grace; but if a different appointment of Providence had left them entirely at liberty, they would have followed precisely the same course.

The Dominicans, who were ardent followers of Thomas Aquinas, and therefore held to the doctrines of predestination and efficacious grace without mitigation or reserve, stoutly opposed this theory of the Jesuits, and very nearly succeeded in procuring its condemnation at Rome. But the intrigues of the latter caused the sentence to be postponed; and, while it was still under deliberation, the death of Clement the Eighth, and the numerous engagements of his successor, Paul the Fifth, caused so much delay, that the controversy passed out of notice and was forgotten. It is probable, that the dispute between these two orders would have gone much further, if the attention of both had not been diverted by their common hostility towards the Port Royalists, which finally caused a hollow peace to be concluded between them. Molinism continued to be taught by the Jesuits, and the Dominicans winked at what they could not approve.

In 1639, Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, died just as he had completed his work called the "Augustinus," which had been the labor of his life, and which contained a kind of summary of the doctrines of Augustine respecting predestination and divine grace. It was published the year after his death; and as it was a heavy and ill-written book, it would probably have attracted little notice, if accident had not rendered it the touchstone of dispute in the memorable controversy between the Port Royalists and the Jesuits. St. Cyran, the leader of the former party, had been the intimate friend of Jansenius, and now strongly recommended his work, as containing the whole secret of the doctrine of predestination. His associates, the pious and learned recluses of Port Royal des Champs, followed in his track, and defended the opinions of the Bishop of Ypres with so much ardor, that they were soon distinguished by the name of Jansenists. The Jesuits were enraged to find their own system of theology falling out of repute, while a dark shade was cast upon the character of their order by the superior reputation of their antagonists for sanctity of life and purity of doctrine. Not daring to controvert openly the opinions of Augustine, they vehemently assailed the work of Jansenius, as containing dangerous and heretical doctrine. Their outcries and artifices would probably have had little effect, if the Jansenists had not unluckily incurred the hatred both of Richelieu and Mazarin; the former imprisoned St. Cyran at Vincennes, and the latter openly countenanced the machinations of the Jesuits. Emboldened by such aid, the Jesuits fulminated the most atrocious calumnies against the members of the hated sect, and left no stone unturned to effect their utter ruin. But their success depended upon maintaining the charge of heresy; for they had to do with men whose abilities and reputation were far greater than their own, and who acquired more public esteem from the very persecution under which they suffering. Such adversaries as Arnauld, Nicole, Saci, and Pascal were

more to be dreaded than simple theologians. They were men of philosophical minds and high literary merit. They had acquired zealous and powerful friends throughout the kingdom, and even at the court, by their talents, their virtues, and the signal services which they had rendered to literature and science. But in that age and country, the single charge of heresy was enough to effect their destruction.

In 1649, Father Cornet, Syndic of the Faculty of the Sorbonne, drew up five propositions on the mysteries of divine grace, which he denounced, as opinions drawn from the work of Jansenius by Arnauld and his followers. After a long contest at Rome, Innocent the Tenth finally decided that the propositions were heretical; and that one of them especially, which declared that Jesus Christ had not died for all men, was false, rash, and scandalous; and if understood to mean, that the Saviour had died for the elect alone, it was impious and blasphemous. But he said nothing about the question, whether these doctrines were actually contained in the "Augustinus." The Jansenists affirmed, that they could not be found there, and though they bowed with perfect submission to the authority of the Holy See, and admitted the five propositions to be heretical in the sense which was attached to them, they refused to condemn the dogma of efficacious grace which is essential for an act of piety, or to reject the authority of St. Augustine, which had always been revered in the Church. They took a distinction between the pope's right to judge of points of doctrine, and his authority to settle questions of fact; the former they admitted to the fullest extent, while they boldly denied the latter. Questions of this class, they said, can be determined only by the senses. Pascal always speaks with entire reverence of the authority of the Church, as represented by the supreme pontiff, in matters of faith; but respecting matters of fact, he holds the following bold language:—

"It was in vain," he says, addressing the Jesuits, "that you obtained a decree from Rome against Galileo, which condemned his opinion respecting the movement of the earth. *That* will never prove that it stands still; and if there is a series of constant observations to show that it turns on its axis, all the men in the world will never prevent it from turning, nor prevent themselves from turning along with it. Do not imagine, either, that the letters of Pope Zachariah, excommunicating St. Virgilius, because he maintained the existence of the antipodes, have annihilated this new world; and although he declared this opinion was a dangerous error, the King of Spain did well in believing Christopher Columbus, who had returned from this new world, rather than the opinion of the pope, who had never been there; and the Church gained a great advantage thereby, as a knowledge of the gospel was thus imparted to many nations, who would otherwise have perished in their sins."—*Letteres Provinciales*, pp. 348, 349.

All the theologians in France were now in arms upon the apparently simple question, whether the five propositions, admitted on all hands to be heretical, were really contained in the work of Jansenius, or not. Arnauld and his followers confidently asked to have them pointed out; the Jesuits accumulated all sorts of authorities, except the book itself, to prove that they were contained in it. The truth was, every body knew that the substance, but not the identical words, of the five propositions were to be found in the book; but the Jesuits dared not cite the passages confirmatory of this view, for then their opponents would have obtained an easy triumph, by showing that Jansenius had used Augustine's own words, and Rome was by no means prepared to repudiate the high authority of that father, "the doctor of grace." The Jesuits charged their antagonists with upholding Calvinism, and were themselves accused, in turn, of favoring Pelagianism. It was a pitiable thing, as D'Alembert says, to see the time and talents of the ablest men in the kingdom wasted on fantastic and interminable discussions about free will and divine grace, and on the important question, whether five unintelligible propositions were contained in a stupid book which nobody ever thought of reading. Persecuted, impri-

soned, exiled on account of these vain disputes, and continually occupied in defending such a futile cause, how many years in their lives have philosophy and letters to mourn over as utterly wasted!

Among those who combated for Jansenius, no one so much distinguished himself for zeal and vehemence as Arnauld. Inflexible, ardent, and indefatigable, he had all the qualities requisite for being the successful leader of a sect. In 1655, a priest of St. Sulpice refused absolution to the Duke de Liancourt, because he was a friend of the Port Royalists, and allowed his grandchild to be a pupil in their seminary. Arnauld took fire at this insult, and published two very severe letters, commenting on the bigotry and injustice evinced by this act. Among other offensive things, he said he had read the work of Jansenius, and could not find the heretical propositions in it; and that the gospel "offers us, in the case of St. Peter, the example of a just man, to whom the divine grace, without which nothing can be effected, was wanting, on an occasion when no one can say that he did not sin." For publishing these assertions, he was immediately arraigned before the Sorbonne as a contumacious heretic. The discussion excited great interest, for it was regarded as a decisive trial of strength between the two parties. The hall of the Sorbonne was crowded, as the Jesuits and their opponents mustered all their forces for the encounter; and the former, especially, brought in so many mendicant monks, as to give occasion for a sarcastic remark by Pascal, that it was more easy for them to find monks than arguments. The condemnation of Arnauld was inevitable; for the Jesuits had strengthened themselves by an alliance with the Dominicans and other orders, wrecks of the Middle Ages, whom a secret instinct brought together as opponents of the new order of things. The minority was composed in great part of the secular clergy. Sentence was passed in January, 1656, when the two assertions cited above were not only condemned as

heretical, but Arnauld himself was for ever excluded from his seat in the faculty of theology.

The triumph of the Jesuits seemed complete; but their joy was at once checked and turned into dismay by the sudden appearance in the opposite ranks of a new champion, far more formidable than any whom they had hitherto encountered. Just before sentence was passed, appeared the first of Pascal's "Provincial Letters," as they are usually called, though the more proper title is, "Letters written by Louis de Montalte to one of his Friends in the Country." The others, eighteen in number, were published successively, at intervals of several weeks' duration, for more than a year and a half. Never was more seasonable and effectual aid brought to the rescue of a sinking cause. These masterpieces of style and argument, of wit and eloquence, did more to ruin the name and the cause of the Jesuits, than all the discussions that had been urged in the schools of theology, and all the enemies they had provoked among the reigning powers of Europe. Eminently popular and intelligible in style, abounding with the happiest flashes of pleasantry and fancy, passing with ease and grace from the keenest ridicule to the loftiest invective, they were read and almost committed to memory by all classes of men, while the heavy and abusive answers to them passed unnoticed, and were soon forgotten. They provoked the unwilling praise even of Voltaire, who said that the earlier letters had more wit than the best comedies of Molière, and the later ones more sublimity than the finest compositions of Bossuet. The same excellent judge attributes to them the fixation of the French language, and says, that, after the lapse of more than a century, not a word or phrase employed in them had become obsolete. The clearness and precision with which the points at issue are explained, and the tone of severe morality and fervent piety which pervades these admirable letters, made them as persuasive and convincing as they were delightful. The

Jesuits found themselves exposed to the ridicule and indignation of all Europe, in a publication destined to be as lasting and as widely diffused as the language in which it was written. They had no writers among their number capable of averting or returning this terrible blow; for it was aptly said of them, that at all times "their penknives were more to be dreaded than their pens." The Jesuit Annat remarked, that, for an answer to the first fifteen letters, he had only to repeat fifteen times over, that the writer of them was a Jansenist.

In the first three letters, Pascal examines the points of dispute, which were involved in the trial of Arnauld. He exposes with great wit and severity the fraudulent alliance between the Jesuits and the Dominicans against the Jansenists, in which the two contracting parties covered up their fundamental differences of opinion by an abuse of language, using phrases which either had no meaning at all, or involved the grossest contradictions. The Dominicans had always maintained the doctrine of "efficacious grace" necessary for any good action, and that human liberty does not consist in indifference, but is compatible with a certain kind of necessity which springs from the irresistible power of divine grace. The Jesuits, who were followers of Molina, denied both these dogmas, and affirmed the existence of "sufficient grace," and "immediate power" to do good or to abstain from it, without any extraneous aid. Their allies employed the same phrases, but attached a different meaning to them, understanding thereby, that the powers spoken of were of no effect without the additional aid of the Spirit. They covenanted to use these technicalities without any reference to the sense which the Molinists attached to them, on condition that the Jesuits would not oblige them to explain their whole meaning, and would continue to declare that the doctrine of the Thomists was orthodox. Here was fine scope for the sarcastic commentary of Pascal on the dogma of "sufficient

grace," which did not suffice for the performance of any pious act, and of "immediate power," which was of no avail except by the special assistance of the Deity. The irony with which he exposes these gross tergiversations is keen but tempered, and flashes out into eloquent indignation only at the close, when he comes to speak of the great purpose of this unholy compact, which was to effect the condemnation of the Jansenists.

By adopting the epistolary form of composition, which admits great freedom of transition and colloquial piquancy of style, and by throwing most of the argument into the garb of dialogue, Pascal contrived to render even this abstruse and perplexed controversy intelligible and pleasant to all classes of readers. He had less difficulty with the remainder of his task, which was to expose the false morality of the Jesuit casuists. From writers of established reputation among them, such as Escobar, Busenbaum, Bauny, and others, he has accumulated a long list of scandalous decisions, and has dwelt upon them with so much wit and severity, that he has rendered the very name of Jesuitism a synonyme for chicane, deception, and falsehood. It is a curious corroboration of this fact, that the popularity of his Letters in France introduced the word *escobarder*, meaning "to prevaricate, or shuffle," into common use in the language. Pascal is often accused, though without reason, of treating the Jesuits unfairly, by holding the whole society responsible for the unauthorized doctrines of individual members. He cites those works only which were of high repute among them, which were adopted by them as guides in the confessional chair, and had passed through many editions. Escobar's treatise on Moral Theology, which Pascal quotes most frequently, went through forty editions, and more than fifty editions were published of the casuistical writings of Busenbaum. The Jesuits, also, were too proud and resolute, too firmly attached to each other and to the reputation of the

society as a whole, to censure or repudiate works which they had once sanctioned. They yielded nothing, they disavowed nothing, but perished in the attempt to defend all. They accused their assailant of making unfair quotations, but did not deny that the writers whom he cited were authoritative. Pascal replied, that he had read Escobar twice through, and had not cited a passage from the other authors, without seeing it in the book, and carefully examining the context.

In truth, the ethical doctrines which he reprobates were interwoven with the fundamental principles of the society, and were a necessary consequence of the position which the Jesuits had assumed, and the mission which they had undertaken to accomplish. Their society was the last great instrument of the old papal dominion. It came into the world too late for its work; for the great schism had taken place, and no array of forces, however well disciplined, could prevent the fatal consequences of such a rent in the Church. They undertook to reverse the declaration of the Saviour, that the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light. They borrowed the weapons of the devil to serve heaven with, and aimed to subjugate the world by conforming themselves to its spirit. When they could not face the nobler instincts of humanity, they made skilful and unhesitating use of all the baser appetites and passions, and became the ready tools and apologists of those who wished to compromise between conscience and convenience. They preached a mitigated doctrine of religion and morals, and thereby made themselves acceptable at court, and gained the private ear of the monarchs, of whom they were the favorite confessors. The Jesuits Annat, Le Tellier, and La Chaise governed France by granting absolution on easy terms to the sins of Louis the Fourteenth; the gratitude of the king being proportioned to the number of his offences, and to the indulgence with which they were considered. Their precepts

formed the monstrous anomaly of his religious character,—a compound of bigoted devotion and moral turpitude. The Jesuits were too cunning to profit in their own persons by the laxity of the principles which they preached to others. Strange as it may seem, they were often irreproachable, and even austere, in their private conduct. This contradiction occasioned the sarcastic remark, that they purchased heaven very dearly for themselves, but sold it a very cheap bargain to their converts.

Acute and subtile in reasoning, they reduced their false morality to a system, and framed consistent rules for their own guidance in the practices of confession and absolution. They defined sin to be a wilful violation of the law of God, and measured its enormity by the penitent's consciousness of its true character, and by his free consent to its commission. Strong temptation and temporary forgetfulness of the divine command palliated the offence, by hiding its sinful nature from the view of the transgressor. Since hardly any one loves sin *as such*, or for its own sake, a sufficient mantle is hereby provided to cover the greatest enormities. Habit, or even bad example, which increases the force of temptation, partially excuses the act; that which is not wantonly or gratuitously committed is not to be severely judged. Other grounds of pardon were also recognized. One of the most abominable of these is the doctrine of mental reservations, which allows one to make a promise, coupled with a secret condition in his own mind, which he knows is not understood by the person to whom the promise is given. A man may say what is true in the meaning that he attaches to it, though he is aware that it will be interpreted in a different sense. Even perjury is allowable, if one only swears outwardly, without inwardly intending what he professes. Duelling is forbidden; but if a person is in danger of losing an office, or forfeiting the good opinion of his ruler, by refusing to engage in a duel, he is not to be condemned for

fighting; for then he does not wish to violate the law, but only to preserve his honor or his station.

The doctrine of probability is another striking example of perverted casuistry. In doubtful cases, an individual might disregard the scruples of his own conscience, and follow the authority of a single writer, if one could be found, who maintained that the desired course of conduct was not unlawful. When there is a conflict of authorities, the opinion upheld by any one of them must be deemed probable, and we are at liberty to select the most indulgent teacher. Moreover, transgression is no longer heinous, if the intention be directed only to the innocent qualities of the act, while its sinful characteristics are put aside and forgotten. In this way, a slight turn of the thoughts was held to exonerate from guilt. Thus, simony is forbidden; but if a person gives money for a benefice, not in order to bribe the bestower, but to gain a means of more effectually serving the Church of God, he is blameless. A man may kill another who gives him a blow, or even publishes a libel against him, provided he does not act from the spirit of hatred or vengeance, but only with a view to retrieve his injured honor.

These were the detestable maxims of Jesuitical casuistry, maxims deliberately recommended in their books and taught from the confessional chair, which Pascal so happily exposed. By holding them up to public reprobation and contempt, he rendered no less signal service to morality and religion than to the almost desperate fortunes of the Port Royalists. But even the publication of the "Provincial Letters," though it covered the assailants with shame, would not, probably, have sufficed for the protection of the assailed, if a supposed miracle, perhaps the best accredited of its class in modern times, had not taken place, and created a popular belief, of which the Jansenists instantly availed themselves, that Heaven itself was interposing in behalf of the persecuted sect.

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Pascal's niece, a girl about eleven years of age, the daughter of Madame Perier, resided as a pupil in the Port Royal nunnery. The poor child had been afflicted for more than three years with a *fistula lacrymalis* in the corner of the left eye. It had affected the bones of the nose and palate, and frightfully disfigured her externally, one side of her face being entirely ulcerated. After the ablest physicians and surgeons of Paris had exhausted their skill upon the case without effect, they determined to make trial of the actual cautery, and the day for this painful operation was fixed. Meanwhile, a collector of relics in the city, named M. de la Potterie, pretended to have gained possession of one of the thorns which had composed the crown that the soldiers platted and put upon our Saviour's head. As Voltaire remarks, by what means such an extraordinary relic was preserved and transported from Jerusalem to the Faubourg St. Jacques we are not informed. But the populace believed in the Holy Thorn, and the members of the several religious communities vied with each other in their eagerness to have it exhibited at their respective establishments. Among others, the Port Royal nuns requested to see it, and it was carried to them on the 24th of March, 1656. It was placed on a little altar within the grate of the choir, and a procession of the pupils and nuns marched by, singing appropriate hymns, and each in her turn kissing the holy relic. One of the instructors stood near, and could not help shuddering as she saw the disfigured little girl approach. "Recommend yourself to God, my child," she exclaimed, "and touch your diseased eye with the Holy Thorn." The command was obeyed, and the girl instantly felt the assurance, as she afterwards declared, that she was healed. She told one of her young companions of the fact that night, and the next day it was made known to the nuns, who examined the eye, and found the cure was complete. There was no tumor, no exudation of matter, not even a scar.

Three or four days afterwards, Dalencé, one of the surgeons who were engaged to apply the hot iron, came to the house, and asked to see the patient. She was brought to him, but he did not recognize her, and said again that he wished to see the girl whose eye and cheek were ulcerated. "She now stands before you," was the reply. Amazed at such an announcement, he examined the little girl with great care, and could not find any trace of the disease. He then sent for his two associates, who repeated the examination, and declared that the patient was entirely cured. The report of this miracle created great sensation in Paris. Crowds flocked to Port Royal, to behold and admire the Holy Thorn. The queen mother deputed M. Felix, first surgeon of the king, who enjoyed a high reputation for probity and skill, to inquire into the truth of the story. He questioned the nuns and the surgeons, drew up an account of the origin, progress, and end of the disease, attentively examined the girl, and at last declared, in a paper attested by his signature, that neither nature nor art had any share in the cure, but that it was attributable to God alone. The cry was now universal, that divine power had interposed in behalf of the Jansenists, and their enemies were covered with confusion and dismay. The severe measures that had been instituted against the Port Royal society were instantly relaxed. The nuns were again allowed to receive their pupils, the illustrious recluses returned to the spot consecrated by their studies and devotions, and even Arnauld came forth from his hiding-place, and gave God thanks. Mademoiselle Perier lived seventy-five years after this event, without any return of the malady. She was still alive when the poet Racine drew up his narrative of the affair, from which we have taken this account.

The generation which has given credit to the wonders of animal magnetism has no right to laugh at the miracle of the Holy Thorn. Putting aside the inference respecting supernatural agency, the fact itself, attested by such men as Felix,

Arnauld, Racine, and Pascal, who had full opportunity to satisfy themselves of the truth of the statement, cannot be lightly questioned. An almost desperate malady was suddenly cured under the circumstances related. Is it reasonable to suppose, that this event was produced by the special interposition of the Deity in behalf of the Jansenists? Thinking and judicious persons of the present day will answer this question, without hesitation, in the negative. They will admit the mysterious character of disease, and the remarkable results often produced by the working of occult natural causes, like the wonderful operations of sympathy, and the curative effects of a lively imagination and strong emotions. But rather than admit the interference of supernatural causes, they will accept the commentary of Voltaire, apart from the diabolical sneer with which it is uttered. "It is not very likely," says the old scoffer, "that God, who makes no miracles to impart a knowledge of our religion to nineteen-twentieths of mankind, to whom this religion is either unknown or an object of horror, did actually interrupt the order of nature for a little girl, in order to justify a few nuns, who pretended that Cornelius Jansen did not write about a dozen lines which were attributed to him, or that he wrote them with a different intention from that imputed to him by the Jesuits."

Neither the publication of the "Provincial Letters," nor the miracle of the Holy Thorn, sufficed to avert for a long period the persecution and final ruin of the sect of the Jansenists. But the respite thus procured lasted till the death of Pascal, who was thus spared the bitter anguish of beholding the defeat and dispersion of his beloved associates. His physical sufferings now became extreme, and, in 1658, they were increased by a long-continued toothache, which almost entirely deprived him of sleep. During the restless hours of the night thus passed in an agony of pain, his mind reverted to his former mathematical pursuits, and, as a mere diversion,

he meditated and solved his famous problems relative to the cycloid. He proposed to find the measure and centre of gravity of any segment whatever of the curve, and the dimensions and centres of gravity of the solids which such a segment forms by revolving round the abscissa or the ordinate. A reward was publicly offered to any geometer who should be able to solve these problems, and the most distinguished mathematicians then in Paris, were appointed as judges for the trial. The task proposed was one of no ordinary difficulty; for Leibnitz and Newton had not yet appeared to develope the marvellous powers of the infinitesimal calculus, which now enables the tyro in science to answer more intricate questions than these with ease and precision. But two attempts were made to gain the prize; one by the Jesuit Lallouère, and the other by Wallis, the English mathematician. Both were judged to be unsatisfactory, and Pascal, who had hitherto kept himself concealed under the signature of Amos Dettonville, an anagram of Louis de Montalte, the name affixed to the "Provincial Letters," then published his own solutions, which commanded the applause of all the scientific world. A controversy ensued with the disappointed competitors; but the opinion of those who were competent to decide such questions was so decisive in favor of Pascal, that it is not necessary to review the grounds of the dispute.

The mind of the religious enthusiast could not long be diverted by such labors from the more solemn topics which had now for years engrossed his attention. His devotional exercises became more and more absorbing, and the practices of penitence and self-denial to which he submitted, were rapidly consuming his enfeebled powers of life. Devoting nearly his whole income to the service of the poor, he deprived himself of every luxury, and of most of the comforts of ordinary existence. In a small chamber, from which he had caused even the tapestry to be removed, lest it should gratify his eye, and where he would not allow himself the

services of a single domestic, so long as his strength sufficed for making his own bed, he passed most of his time in prayer and the study of the Scriptures. To this cheerless and unfurnished apartment men distinguished in every walk of science and letters frequently resorted, to profit by the conversation of the greatest genius of his country, and perhaps of his age. He talked with vivacity and wit, as might be expected from the author of the "Provincial Letters," and displayed without effort or reserve the stores of his information and the vast range of his intellect. Human nature is weak, and he could not but be gratified and flattered to find his conversation so acceptable to others, and to observe the superiority of his spirit to theirs. But this pleasure was a weakness, it was even a sin, in the eyes of the pious devotee. It was to be mortified with the other enticements of the flesh, and to be kept in subjection to the love of God and the hope of heaven. He wore a girdle, with sharp points on the inside, next to his flesh, and when he felt any movement of vanity or extraordinary pleasure in conversation, he pressed the iron torture more closely to his side, that physical pain might remind him of his frailty and his duty. Pitiable and perverted, indeed, though fervent and pure in him, was the religious faith which led to the infliction of such gratuitous suffering.

In strict conformity to his principle, that it was necessary to renounce all the pleasures of this world, he tried to stifle even the ordinary impulses of natural affection, and to preserve a cold and rigid exterior to his nearest friends, even when his heart was overflowing with kindness and love. He would not permit the caresses of his sister's children, saying that it was the indulgence of a sinful love; but he showed his real tenderness for them by many substantial proofs. Madame Perier once complained to her sister, that their brother spoke coldly to her, and even seemed to be annoyed when she was rendering to him the most affectionate services

in his illness. Jacqueline, who shared his religious fervor, understood his motives better, and explained them. "And in truth," says the elder sister, "when there was occasion for my brother's assistance, he showed so much eagerness to embrace it, and so many proofs of affection, that I had no longer any reason to doubt that he loved me." His kindness was not confined to those with whom he was connected by natural ties; on the sick and destitute stranger his bounty was lavished with all the heroism of benevolence. During his last illness, he had given a lodging in his house to a poor man and his son, from whom he received no return but gratitude. The son was attacked with the small-pox, and could not be carried to another habitation without danger. Pascal's feeble condition required the constant care of his sister, and as her children had not had this disease, he desired to save them from the risk of receiving the infection through their mother's attendance upon himself. Under these circumstances, weak and suffering as he was, he gave up his own home to the sick boy, and went to reside at the house of his sister.

Except his elder sister, Madame Perier, he was now alone in the world. His father had died in 1651, and the loss had made a deep impression upon him; for the similarity of their characters and pursuits had drawn them together in a closer and more affectionate intimacy than that which usually exists between parent and child. A letter which he wrote on this occasion is preserved among his works, and shows a spirit of the most exalted piety, without a trace of cant or affected feeling. Ten years afterwards, he lost Jacqueline also, the infant actress, whose graceful pleading had redeemed their father from exile, and whose later years had been entirely consecrated to God's service in the nunnery at Port Royal. She had become sub-prioress in this institution, and her death was hastened by perplexity and grief, after the machinations of the Jesuits had at length caused the inexorable decree to go forth, that all the Jansenist nuns should subscribe the formu-

lary, which contained an explicit renunciation of the opinions they had so long cherished. Strange effect, that a perverted faith and ecclesiastical persecution should cause a woman to die of grief, because required to sign a declaration, that the five propositions in their heretical sense were actually written in the book of Jansenius! The historian of the Port Royalists records the remark which she made on her death-bed, that she was "the first victim of the formulary." Pascal was tenderly attached to her, and when informed of her death, exclaimed with a sigh, "God grant that my end may be like hers!"

His own life was now rapidly drawing to a close, though one work still remained for him to accomplish. It was meet that a spirit touched to so fine issues should not leave the world without bequeathing to it a more valuable and befitting memorial of united genius and piety than was contained in the letters respecting the controversy with the Jesuits. For three years before his death, the progress of his disease, and the paroxysms of pain that he endured, left only infrequent and short intervals during which his mind was capable of effort; but these he zealously employed in making preparations for a great work on the philosophy of human nature and the proofs of the Christian religion. On these subjects he wrote down detached thoughts, as they occurred to him, upon loose scraps of paper; and when he was incapable of holding the pen for himself, a faithful domestic sat by his bedside, and wrote from his dictation. In this way there was accumulated a mass of unconnected hints and aphorisms, which he was not allowed to arrange and complete.

In the summer of 1662, another painful disease was added to those which had already undermined his constitution and brought him to the brink of the grave. When this malady was at its height, frequently depriving him of consciousness, he was removed to his sister's house for the reason already mentioned. There he tranquilly occupied himself in prepar-

ing for death. He made his will, leaving large sums to the poor; and would have bequeathed to them his whole property, if the condition of his sister's children, who were not rich, had not required his aid. As he could not do more for the sick and the destitute, he wished at least to die among them, and he eagerly desired his friends to carry him to the Hospital for the Incurables. They could dissuade him from executing this intention only by promising, that, if he recovered, he should be free to devote his whole life and property to the service of the poor. In the beginning of August, as his end was obviously nigh at hand, he called with great earnestness for the last services of the Church. This request was at length granted, after a fainting-fit had occurred, which lasted so long that his friends believed he was dead. But he recovered sufficiently to raise himself on the couch, and receive the sacrament with marks of resignation and deep feeling, which drew tears from all the beholders. A moment afterwards, he fell into convulsions, which closed the scene. He died on the 29th of August, 1662, aged thirty-nine years. In the church of St. Etienne du Mont, at Paris, a marble tablet on one of the pillars near the great altar, with a simple inscription, informs the reader that he is standing upon the tomb of Pascal.

"Such," says his able biographer, Bossut, "was this extraordinary man, who was endowed by nature with all the gifts of the understanding; a geometer of the first rank, a profound logician, a lofty and eloquent writer. If we remember, that, in the course of a very short life, and while suffering under almost constant attacks of disease, he invented the arithmetical machine, the principles of the calculation of chances, and the method of solving the problems respecting the cycloid; that he finally determined the great question, which was dividing the opinions of the scientific world, concerning the pressure of the atmosphere; that he was the first to establish by mathematical proofs the general laws of the equilibrium of fluids; that he wrote one of the most perfect works which ever appeared in the French language; that in his "Thoughts" there are passages of unrivalled eloquence and depth of reflection,—we shall be

ready to believe, that a greater genius never existed in any country or in any age."

The loose hints and unconnected fragments, which he had prepared for his great work on the proofs of the Christian religion, were first collected and published in 1670, under the title of "Thoughts of M. Pascal upon Religion and some other Topics." They were left at his death in a state of utter confusion, and in the first edition many of them were suppressed, and the others were printed in a very defective arrangement, so that portions of the work appeared very obscure. Bossut superintended a complete edition of them in 1779, having diligently examined the original manuscripts, and perfected the classification which was commenced by Condorcet. A few years before, Voltaire had published an edition, with notes such as might be expected from one of his character and principles. He hated Pascal's creed, and called him "a sublime misanthrope;" but according to his own confession, he had studied the "Provincial Letters" and the "Thoughts," till he almost knew them by heart. We read them now as general aphorisms, which apparently have little immediate connexion with each other, though the leading purpose of the writer is sufficiently obvious, and they all seem to converge towards the great questions respecting human nature and destiny. The fine discernment of the writer, the scientific exactness and condensation of the style, are the more apparent from the broken and fragmentary condition of the "Thoughts." There is a want of roundness and flow in the composition, but it is admirable for terseness and epigrammatic point. Sometimes he is hurried away by the love of antithesis, and the expression is often so elliptical as to be obscure. But the original and striking character of the reflections, the keen analysis of motives, the vivacity and energy of the style, the rapid and forcible progress of the arguments, and the singular richness and novelty of the illustrations, command the reader's attention through all

these disadvantages. A more impressive and eloquent work does not exist in the language.

The "Thoughts" are deeply tinged with the despondency of the writer's mind, and with the peculiarities of his religious opinions. He seems to triumph in exposing the weakness and imperfection of human nature, and the vanity of human pursuits. The corruption of the heart and the weakness of the intellect are the themes on which he most willingly expatiates, using at times bitter sarcasm and the loftiest invective. "His melancholy genius," says Hallam, "plays in wild and rapid flashes, like the lightning round the scathed oak, about the fallen greatness of man." But it is not with the mocking spirit of a satirist that he dilates upon the fallen and wretched condition of our race. In his eyes, man is weak and degraded, but not contemptible; his view is fixed as much upon the heights from which he has fallen, as upon the abyss into which he is plunged. His magnificent lamentations are uttered in the spirit of Jeremiah weeping over the sins of his nation, and pointing out the ruin with which it is menaced. He seeks to humble only that he may exalt; to point out the frailty and wretchedness of man's condition in this world, only that his attention may be diverted from it, and fixed upon the unutterable splendors of the life to come. "Man is so great," he says, "that his grandeur appears from the knowledge he has of his own misery. A tree knows not that it is wretched. True, it is sad to know that we are miserable; but it is also a mark of greatness to be aware of this misery. Thus all the wretchedness of man proves his nobleness. It is the unhappiness of a great lord, the misery of a dethroned king." The misery of our present condition is aggravated by the consciousness that we have fallen from a state of innocence and peace. Like the poet, Pascal finds that there is no greater grief than the recollection of happiness formerly enjoyed. "Who, but a discrowned monarch," he asks, "is grieved

that he does not possess a throne? Who thinks himself unhappy, because he has but one mouth? And who is not unhappy, if he has but one eye? No one ever thought of sorrowing, because he has not three eyes; but he is inconsolable, if he has but one."

The chief purpose of the work is to show man's need of religion, in order both to explain the enigma of his present state, and to console him in the midst of privation and suffering. The argument is not addressed to the understanding, but to the feelings; and its aim is rather to persuade than to convince. "The heart has its reasons," he says, "which the intellect knoweth not of; we perceive this truth in a thousand things. It is the heart, and not the reason, which finds out God; and this is perfect faith, God made known to the heart." Metaphysical proofs of a God, he continues, are so far removed from the ordinary sphere of human reason, and so abstruse, that they make little impression; if serviceable to a few, they will be so only so long as the demonstration is before them; an hour afterwards, they will fear they have been deceived. Cicero expresses the same thought still more clearly. *Nescio quo modo, dum lego, assentior; cum posui librum, et mecum ipse cœpi cogitare, assencio omnis illa elabitur.* Pascal argues further, that this kind of proof can lead only to a speculative knowledge of God, and to know him in this manner is nearly as bad as to be entirely ignorant of him. In order to know God like a Christian, man must become acquainted with the misery of his own condition, his unworthiness, and his need of a mediator. These truths must not be separated, or they will become not only useless, but injurious. "To know God, without being aware of our own misery, gives birth to pride; to be conscious of our own wretchedness, without any knowledge of Jesus Christ, leads to despair. The knowledge of the Saviour exempts us both from pride and despair; for in him we find God, and the secret of our miserable state, and the means of rising above

it." We must become acquainted with human things, he adds, before loving them; but we must love divine things in order to know them.

It is obvious, that Pascal's intention was to create the state of mind which is necessary for the due reception of religious truth, before offering any arguments in direct support of that truth. He seeks first to humble the pride of the intellect, to point out the enigmas and inconsistencies of our nature, its greatness and feebleness, its pride and abjectness, to convince mankind of their degraded and corrupt condition, and then to show, in the sublime mysteries of Christian faith, at once an explanation of their fallen state, a solace for their sufferings in this world, and a glorious hereafter. "Every one," he says, "must take his side, and range himself in the ranks either of Pyrrhonism or dogmatism; for he who thinks to remain neuter will be a Pyrrhonist *par excellence;* this neutrality is the very essence of Pyrrhonism." But the difficulty of making the choice is great; for "reason confutes the dogmatists, and nature confounds the skeptics; we have an incapacity of demonstration, which the former cannot overcome; we have a conception of truth, which the latter cannot disturb." Thus bandied about between opposing difficulties, constantly urged to continue a pursuit which can never be successful, man is disappointed, helpless, and miserable, unless light come to him from heaven, and an almighty arm be stretched out for his aid. "Man," he observes, "has a secret instinct, that leads him to seek diversion and employment from without; this springs from the consciousness of his continual misery. He has another secret impulse, remaining from the grandeur of his primitive state, which teaches him that happiness can exist only in repose. And from these two contrary instincts, there arises in him an obscure idea, concealed in the depths of the soul, that prompts him to seek repose through agitation, and even to fancy that the contentment he does not enjoy will yet be

found, if by struggling still a little longer he can open the door to rest. Thus passes his whole life. He seeks for repose by contending against certain obstacles; and when he has surmounted them, repose itself becomes insupportable."

The book is so incomplete and fragmentary, that it is very difficult to select passages which will give a fair view of the drift of his remarks, or the general characteristics of his manner. His language, also, from its remarkable compression and terseness, hardly admits of being translated without losing most of its vigor. But the following extract may give some idea of his power of thought and utterance:—

"Let not man confine his views simply to the objects which surround him; let him contemplate all nature in its lofty and entire majesty; let him consider the great orb set like an ever-burning beacon to illumine the universe; let the earth appear to him like a point, in comparison with the vast circle which this luminary seems to describe; let him wonder that this vast orbit is itself but a delicate point, when compared with that of the stars which roll in the firmament. If our sight stops here, the imagination passes beyond. The intellect ceases to conceive, before nature fails to supply. All that we see of the universe is but a spot imperceptibly small in the ample bosom of nature. No idea approaches the extent of infinite space. In vain would we dilate our conceptions; we image to ourselves only atoms, in comparison with the reality. It is an infinite sphere, of which the centre is everywhere, and the circumference nowhere. And it is one of the most striking marks of the omnipotence of God, that our imagination is lost in this thought.

"And now, returning to himself, let him consider what man is, in comparison with all that is; let him look upon himself as lost in this by-corner of nature; and from the appearance of this little dungeon in which he is lodged—this visible world—let him learn to estimate himself, and the cities and kingdoms of this earth, at their true value * * * * In truth, what is man in the midst of nature? A cipher in respect to the infinite, and all in comparison with nonentity,—a mean betwixt nothing and all. He is infinitely far removed from the two extremes; and his being is not less distant from the nothingness whence he was drawn, than from the infinite in which he is engulfed. In the order of intelligent things, his intellect holds the same rank that his body does in the expanse of nature; all that he can do is to discern some phenomena from the

midst of things, in eternal despair of ever knowing their beginning or their end. All things came from nothing, and extend even to the infinite. Who can follow this astonishing progress? The author of these marvels understands them; to all others they are unintelligible. We burn with desire to know every thing, and to build a tower which shall rise even to the heavens. But our whole edifice cracks, and the earth opens beneath us even to the abyss."

With this striking picture of the insignificance and weakness of man, contrast the following sublime reflection upon his grandeur as a thinking soul. "Man is the feeblest branch of nature, but it is a branch that thinks. It is not necessary that the whole universe should rise in arms to crush him. A vapor, a drop of water, is enough to kill him. But if the universe should crush him, he would still be nobler than that which causes his death; for he knows that he is dying, and the universe knows nothing of its power over him." It is in view of contrarieties like these, that Pascal exclaims, "What an enigma then is man! What a strange, chaotic, and contradictory being! Judge of all things, feeble earth-worm, depositary of the truth, mass of uncertainty, glory and butt of the universe,—if he boasts himself, I abase him; if he humbles himself, I make my boast of him; and I always contradict him, till he comprehends that he is an incomprehensible monster."

The great doctrine of the book, to which most of the preceding illustrations are subservient, is the duty of the entire submission of human reason in matters of faith. To this precept the writer recurs again and again, and seems never to be weary of inculcating it. Unquestionably it is a great truth, but a most perilous one to define and apply. He admits, that "reason alone can tell where reason ends." The humility of his spirit in enforcing this dogma appears the more remarkable, when contrasted with his singular boldness and independence of thought upon all other topics. On all matters of scientific inquiry, his resistance to the weight of

authority, and his assertion of the right of private judgment, is one of the most striking traits of his genius. "Truth," he says, "is the most ancient of all things,—older than all the opinions that have been had of it; whatever aspect antiquity may present, truth, however lately discovered, ought always to have the advantage over it; it is gross ignorance to imagine that nature began to be, when it began to be known." His success in refuting the old scholastic doctrine of nature's abhorrence of a vacuum probably strengthened this independence of mind, and led him to dwell upon it with more earnestness. His fine remark, in speaking of the weight due to authority, that the ancients after all were only the children among mankind, has been so often cited without giving him credit for it, that it is worth while to quote it in his own words, though with considerable abridgment.

"Animals make no progress. The hexagonal cells of bees were as accurately measured and finished a thousand years ago, as they are at the present day. It is not so with man, who is born for eternity. He is ignorant at first, but constantly acquires knowledge, not only from his own experience, but from the accumulated wisdom of his predecessors. Men are now very nearly in the same condition that the ancient philosophers would have arrived at, if they could have lived till our times, constantly adding to their knowledge what they might have acquired by study during so many centuries. All the generations of men during so many ages ought to be considered only as one man, who lives for ever, and is continually learning. Hence, how improper it is to respect philosophers for their antiquity! For as old age is the period farthest removed from infancy, who does not see, that the old age of this universal man ought not to be sought for in the years nearest to his birth, but in those most remote from it? Those whom we call the ancients were truly young in all things, and formed the infancy of mankind. As we have joined to their knowledge the experience of the ages which came after them, it is in us that this antiquity is to be found which we are wont to revere in others."

As Lord Bacon says nearly the same thing, it is not unlikely that Pascal derived the first hint of it from the writings

of the English philosopher; which is a farther proof of what we have already had reason to suspect, that he had profited by these writings in the earlier part of his career. After this resolute assertion of the liberties of mind in questions of human science, it is lamentable to find Pascal carrying his principle of submission in matters of faith so far as deliberately to state the following monstrous and revolting doctrine. "What can be more contrary to the rules of our wretched justice, than to damn eternally an infant incapable of volition, for an offence in which he seems to have had no share, as it was committed six thousand years before he was born? Certainly, nothing shocks us more rudely than this doctrine; and yet, without this mystery, the most inconceivable of all, we are incomprehensible even to ourselves. Man is more inconceivable without this mystery, than the mystery is inconceivable to man."

Only this submissive and childlike spirit in religious inquiry could have retained the otherwise bold and inquisitive intellect of Pascal in bondage to the Romish Church. This frame of mind may be partially accounted for by his experience in the Jansenist controversy, which had led him to put great stress upon the distinction between the *droit* and the *fait*, between questions of doctrine and matters of fact. He was thus induced blindly to accept whatever was taught by the fathers and the councils, while he opposed with unflinching skepticism the doctrines of the scholastic philosophy. He refers frequently to the Catholic doctrine respecting the eucharist, and the Calvinistic one of the transmission of sin, in illustration of his favorite theme, the incapacity of human nature to comprehend religious truth. The following acute remark relates to the practice of auricular confession:—

"Is it not true, that we hate the truth and those who utter it to us, while we love those who practise pleasant deceptions upon us, and wish to be esteemed by them as different beings from what we are? Here is a proof of it which shocks me. The Catholic religion does not require one

to make known his sins indifferently to all the world; it permits him to conceal them from the view of other men in general; but it makes an exception in favour of one person, to whom it commands him to disclose the very depths of his heart, and to appear in his sight as he really is. There is but one man in the world whom it commands us thus to disabuse; and it binds him to inviolable secrecy, so that this knowledge is in him as if it did not exist at all. Can we imagine any thing more charitable and mild? And yet, the corruption of man is such, that he finds even this law too severe, and it is one of the principal reasons which have caused a great part of Europe to revolt against the Church. How unjust and unreasonable is the heart of man, to object doing to one person what it would be only fair to do to all men! For is it just that we should deceive them? There are different degrees in this aversion to the truth; but it may be said to exist in all in some measure; for it is inseparable from self-love."

This is very ingenious, but it is sophistical. We do not love nor practise deception *as such*, or for its own sake. We detest the flatterer, and cast him off as soon as his falsehood is exposed. We are pleased, indeed, when we learn that others entertain a good opinion of us; but this is only a mark of the kindly sympathy which binds societies of men together. The avowal, whether true or false, of this opinion is a matter of no substantive importance; it is the fact alone in which we are interested; if thoroughly convinced of the existence of this opinion, we could very well dispense with the expression of it. We are reluctant to expose our faults, because unwilling to fall in the estimation of our friends, or to afford matter of triumph to our enemies; but concealment is not prized for its own sake, nor from any wish to deceive. We fear ungenerous and harsh constructions; if the fault could be made known with all its palliating circumstances, and thus seem as excusable in the eyes of others as it appears in our own, its disclosure would be a matter of comparative indifference. Some feelings, also, though perfectly innocent, are sensitive, and fear the light; we conceal them, certainly without any consciousness of wrong, or any possibility of injurious deception. Faults are also hidden; for though

wrong in themselves, they may be harmless in respect to others, whose good opinion we prize, and therefore may be concealed from them without leading them into error, or exposing them to hazard. It is altogether too harsh to call silence deception, when it is practised under a belief that others have no right to know a secret which in no wise concerns their welfare, and which they would be likely to misconstrue, because all the attendant circumstances cannot be explained to them. Protestants object to auricular confession, not so much from unwillingness to confess their secret sins, as from a dislike of the assumption of authority, by a person weak and fallible like themselves, to know and judge their actions. Veracity is always a duty; but Pascal forgets that silence also is often a virtue. He might have been reminded of it by the next illustration which he gives of man's insincerity and opposition to the truth, from the fact, that the best friends often speak unguardedly of each other when out of hearing, and from the mischief that is often caused by indiscreet reports of such conversations. If every man, says he, knew all that his best friend had said of him, there would not be three friends left in the world. Such reports often do mischief, we admit; yet not because they are true, but because they are imperfect. If one reported not only the indiscreet remark, but all the circumstances which led to it, the innocent intention with which it was uttered, and the unwillingness of the speaker to cause pain or commit a wrong, no breach of friendship would ensue.

We have no space to carry any further our analysis of this remarkable book, which such competent judges as Dr. Arnold have ranked among the "greatest masterpieces of human genius." Our remarks, desultory and incomplete as the work itself, must end with the citation of a few more of the aphorisms, though much of their spirit necessarily escapes in a translation. Speaking of the Jewish Scriptures, Pascal observes:—

"I find no reason to doubt the truth of a book which contains all these things; for there is a great difference between a book which a person makes and throws among a people, and a book which of itself makes a people. We cannot doubt that the book is at least as old as the people."

"Between us and heaven, hell or annihilation, there is only human life, which of all things in the world is the frailest."

"When we would show any one that he is mistaken, our best course is to observe on what side he considers the subject, for his view of it is generally right on his side, and admit to him, that he is right so far. He will be satisfied with this acknowledgment, that he was not wrong in his judgment, but only inadvertent in not looking at the whole of the case. For we are less ashamed of not having seen the whole than of being deceived in what we do see; and this may perhaps arise from an impossibility of the understanding being deceived in what it does see, just as the perceptions of the senses, as such, must always be true."

"Nature has its perfections, to show that it is the image of God, and its faults, to show that it is only his image."

"Unbelievers are the most credulous persons in the world; they believe the miracles of Vespasian, in order not to believe those of Moses."

"The multitude which cannot be reduced to unity is confusion; and the unity which does not depend on multitude is tyranny."

"The synagogue did not perish, because it was a type of the church; but as it was only a type, it fell into servitude. The symbol existed until the reality appeared, in order that the church might always be visible, either in the image which foreshadowed it, or in reality."

"What can be more ridiculous and vain than the doctrine of the Stoics, and what more baseless than their whole reasoning? They conclude, that what a man can sometimes do he can always do; and because the desire of glory enables those who are actuated by it to accomplish something noble, that others will be able to do as much. Theirs are the convulsive efforts of a man in a fever, which one in health cannot imitate."

"I cannot pardon Descartes. It was his ambition, in his system of philosophy, to be able to do without God altogether; but he was obliged to suppose the Deity gave the world a fillip in order to set it in motion; after which there was nothing more for him to do."

"We are not to suppose that Plato and Aristotle always wore their long robes, and appeared as dignified and serious personages. They were good-natured persons, who enjoyed a laugh with their friends, like the rest of the world; and when they wrote upon legislation and politics, it was only by way of enjoying themselves and seeking diversion. This was the least philosophical and the least serious portion of their lives: the

most philosophical part of it was when they lived most simply and tranquilly."

"The virtue of a man ought not to be measured by his great efforts, but by his ordinary conduct."

"If we dreamed every night the same thing, it would affect us as much perhaps as the objects which we see every day. If an artizan was sure of dreaming every night, for twelve hours, that he was a king, I believe he would be nearly as happy as a king who should dream every night, for twelve hours, that he was an artizan. If we dreamed every night that we were pursued by enemies and harassed by terrible phantoms, while we passed every day in various occupations, we should suffer nearly as much as if the dream were true, and should dread going to sleep, as we now dread to wake, from the fear of really falling into such misfortunes. In truth, these dreams would cause nearly as much suffering as the reality. But because dreams are very various and unlike each other, what we see in them affects us much less than what we see in our waking hours, on account of the continuity of events when we are awake; this continuity, however, is not so fixed and constant as to be wholly free from change, though the scenes shift less suddenly and less frequently. Life is only a rather more constant dream."

POETS.

THE POET.

"He touched the earth, a soul of flame,
His bearing proud, his spirit high,
Filled with the heavens from whence he came,
He smiled upon man's destiny.

Yet smiled as one who knew no fear,
And felt a secret strength within,
Who wondered at the pitying tear
Shed over human loss and sin.

Lit by an inward brighter light
Than aught that round about him shone,
He walked erect through shades of night,
Clear was his pathway—but how lone;

Men gaze in wonder and in awe
Upon a form so like to theirs;
Worship the presence, yet withdraw,
And carry elsewhere warmer prayers.

Yet when the glorious pilgrim guest,
Forgetting once his strange estate,
Unloosed the lyre from off his breast
And strung its chords to human fate;

And gaily snatching some rude air,
Carolled by idle passing tongue,
Gave back the notes that lingered there,
And in heaven's tones earth's low lay sung;

Then warmly grasped the hand that sought
To thank him with a brother's soul,
And when the generous wine was brought,
Shared in the feast and quaffed the bowl;

Men laid their hearts low at his feet,
And sunned their being in his light,
Pressed on his way his steps to greet,
And in his love forgot his might.

And when a wanderer long on earth,
On him its shadow also fell,
And dimmed the lustre of a birth,
Whose day-spring was from heaven's own well;

They cherished even the tears he shed,
Their woes were hallowed by his woe,
Humanity, half cold and dead,
Had been revived in genius' glow."

—*The Dial.*

DANTE.*

"Dal mondo scese ai ciechi abissi, e poi
Che l'uno e l'altro inferno vide, e a Dio
Scorto dal gran pensier vivo saliò,
E ne diè in terra vero lume a noi.
Stella d'alto valor coi raggi suoi
Gli occulti eterni a noi ciechi scoprio,
E n'ebbe il premio al fin, che'l mondo rio
Dona sovente ai più pregiate eroi;
Di Dante mal fur l'opre conosciute,
E 'l bel desio da quel popolo ingrato,
Che solo ai giusti manca di salute.
Pur fuss' io tal! Ch' a simil sorte nato,
Per l'aspro esilio suo con la virtute
Darei del mondo il più felice stato."

MICHAEL ANGELO.†

IT is about thirty years since Mr. Cary gave to the public his translation of Dante, and to him the English reader is indebted for the first complete and nearly adequate idea of the great Italian. The translators who preceded him either tried their skill only on small fragments of the poem, or utterly failed in transferring its spirit to the English. The translator's task is always a delicate one; a poet alone can translate

* *The Vision; or Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise of* DANTE ALIGHIERI. Translated by REV. HENRY FRANCIS CARY, A.M.

† Mr. John Edward Taylor has favoured the Editor with a translation of this Sonnet, which he here subjoins.

"From earth descending, to the blind abyss,
He scanned the one and other hell, and then
To God went up, fill'd with the living thought,
And gave the light of truth to man on earth.
Star of high worth, that with its beaming rays
Disclosed to our blind sight the eternal truths;

a poet; and even then, with the best abilities he can bring to the task, the finer effluence of the poetry is apt to escape. Words in the original may be highly poetical, made so by associations which have grown to them and given them a hue, like the weather-stains on the marble pillars of old temples,—while the corresponding words in the other language may be only simple and prosaic terms. Whether the translator confine himself closely to his master, as Cary does for the most part,—or departs widely from his author, and supplies an obscurity or a defect of language by a liberal paraphrase, as Coleridge occasionally does in his version of Wallenstein,—the translation, in either case, is but an approximation to the original.

Whatever difficulties there may be in rightly estimating foreign poets, from peculiarity of dialect, national characteristics, or the temper of their times, are to be found in full force with respect to Dante. We read him slowly, by piecemeal, and fritter away our interest by dwelling upon details, instead of swelling the mind to comprehend the one grand whole. We are studying grammar, not poetry; the Italian language, the old Italian, nervous, knotty, and involved, instead of the Divina Commedia. We are examining an immense cathedral with a microscope; and though even then we must often admire the polish of the marbles and the beauty of the mosaics, we may oftener be troubled, because this buttress is too rough and that pillar too big, this angel's cheeks too fat, and that sculptured saint too lean. After all, we must throw away our microscope and stand off, if we would see the whole and not merely the parts. We must

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And found at length a wicked world's reward,
Too often given to the greatest men.
Ill were the works of Dante felt, or known
His glorious purpose, by that thankless crowd,
For to the just alone is safety barr'd.
Yet were I such a man!—born to like fate,
I would exchange the greatest lot on earth
For his sad exile, with his virtue join'd."

watch the light playing upon its lofty spires, we must walk through its silent aisles, we must sit down and meditate in its sombre recesses, if we would bring our souls into harmony with the mighty structure. For the remedy of all the difficulties which for a long time prevented the great poet of Italy from being justly appreciated by English readers, we are greatly indebted to Mr. Cary, whose fourth edition, prepared but a short time before his recent death, is now before us. We trust no apology is needed for making it the occasion, after so long a silence on the topic, of bringing again before our readers one of the "all Etruscan three" and his great work. Besides the prominent interest which the poet himself inspires, many reasons might be adduced to show, that a consideration of his genius and the circumstances under which it was developed is no unfruitful work for the student of English literature. One is, that Italy was at that time, and for years afterward, the great fountain of learning and refinement. It was at the head of Christendom. Italian poetry, also, became familiar at an early period to the English, and exerted a marked influence upon their literature. Almost every English poet, from Chaucer to Dryden, drew something from the Italian, or from events in Italian history. We might add, as a third and more particular reason, that Dante, of all poets, shows most entirely the spirit of his age and of the preceding ages, gave the strongest impulse to other poets, and especially that he and Milton have at the same time such near affinities and such marked diversities.

The biography of Dante is brief and meagre. He was born in Florence, in May, 1265, and died at Ravenna, in July or September, 1321, seven years before the birth of Chaucer, and more than seventy before the Canterbury Tales were written. His family was ancient and honorable; his education complete, according to the idea of his times; his accomplishments liberal and manly. He studied at the Universities of Bologna and Padua, and, it is said, urged by

his eagerness for learning, travelled to Paris, and even to Oxford. While yet in his boyhood, he became acquainted with Beatrice Portinari, a beautiful Florentine of his own rank, and but a year younger than himself. In his own graceful and elevating language, he tells us how they saw each other, how he loved her, how they were parted, and how she died at the age of twenty-four, and became a saint in heaven. As the poet grew in years and learning, he acquired fame in battle and honor as a magistrate and ambassador. At the age of thirty-five he became chief of the priors, and seems to have been an active and energetic member of the government. He proposed some of the most vigorous measures for healing the wounds of the state, and at the time of his sentence of exile was ambassador to the pope.

The times in which he lived were peculiarly turbulent and perilous. Men's passions both for good and evil, the contests of freedom and tyranny, were fierce and uncontrolled. The Italian republics were in the full enjoyment of their irregular and vehement liberty. Great cities had grown up in all the north of Italy, and each city had its dependent surrounding territory, its prince or its nobles, and its factions. The great contest between the Church and the Emperor, a contest begun by Hildebrand two centuries before, was not yet laid to rest. Italy fought against Germany and Germany against Italy, and with varied success. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were periods of almost ceaseless conflicts, either between the two great parties of the North and the South, or between factions which were rife in every town, and only kept in abeyance by the pressure of a great and common danger. Frederick Barbarossa had ravaged Italy, but he could not subdue it. In 1162, he razed Milan to the ground; in 1167, it was rebuilt by all the cities in the League of Lombardy, a league of all parties for the defence of the common liberty against a common enemy. Innocent the Third had reasserted the power of the church with all

the vigor of Gregory the Seventh, and lent the might of his spiritual forces to whatever prince would in turn augment the authority of the pope.

In the midst of these complicated and long-continued distractions, had grown up the great maritime powers of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa. Their fleets were united in every part of the Great Sea to chastise the Turks and the pirates, —or, delivered from the fear of those barbarous foes, fought with equal fury among themselves for supremacy. Venice had already consolidated her vigorous aristocracy; her merchants were princes. "Genoa la superba," around its splendid gulf, had built up palaces, which are now, after six centuries, the admiration of travellers, as they were then. She had humbled the power of Pisa by a terrible victory, and compelled Venice to sue for peace. She maintained military and mercantile colonies at St. Jean d'Acre in the Holy Land, at Pera opposite to Constantinople, and at Caffa in the Black Sea. Architecture had begun to flourish. Pisa was celebrated for its "profusion of marble, its patrician towers, and its grave magnificence;" and in one "sacred corner" there stood then, as now, its Leaning Tower, its Cathedral, its Baptistery, and its Campo Santo. The stately Palazzo Vecchio at Florence had been built, and the churches of St. Croce and St. Maria were begun; it is curious to add, they are not finished yet. With the genius of Casella, Cimabue, and Giotto began a new era for music, painting, and sculpture; and Andrea de Pisa had cast those bronze doors for the Baptistery at Florence which Michael Angelo used to say were worthy to be the gates of paradise. The cities, according to Sismondi, were surrounded with walls, and paved with flat stones, while the inhabitants of Paris could not stir out of their houses without plunging into the mud.

It was also an age not undistinguished by great men; the age of Roger Bacon, of Albertus Magnus, of Bonaventura,

Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, of Thomas the Rhymer and Marco Polo, of Sir William Wallace and Edward the First. It was an age of immense activity, of power, and wealth, and splendor, but not of justice or freedom. Not only did city fight against city with the fury of insanity, where all true policy would have taught them to combine for mutual assistance and support; but every city was torn by the fiercest factions. Every street was the scene of a battle. The Coliseum, the tombs of Adrian, and Augustus, and Cecilia Metella, the arches and the temples of Rome, were turned into fortresses. The sombre architecture of the old palaces, with their lower stories of solid masonry, and the few loopholes grated with iron, show to the modern that a man's house was then literally his castle. The most bitter and cruel factions were those of the Guelphs and Ghibelines. Through circumstances which we need not turn aside to detail, the names of two German families became the rallying words of parties which for three hundred years were relentless in their hatred. The Guelphs were generally in favor of the freedom of the Italian cities, and as generally had the church on their side. The Ghibelines sympathized for the most part with the German emperor. Powerful families of both these factions inhabited every city, and it required but a slight circumstance to fan into a flame the latent fire of controversy. The picture which Bulwer gives in his Rienzi, of the strife between the Colonna and Orsini, had probably a thousand counterparts. Success oscillated from one side to the other, and the fierceness of each party could be measured only by that of its rival. On this troubled theatre was Dante to act his part, to bear his sorrows, to exhibit his greatness. Disappointments less keen and sufferings less severe would have left him a more joyous life, but the vast capacities of his spirit might have remained to us for ever unrevealed.

Of all the cities of Italy, Florence was dignified by the

most learned men, and by the greatest love of justice and of freedom. According to Sismondi, its judicial institutions were the first which offered any guaranty to the citizen. Yet Florence was torn by fierce party spirit. Only five years before Dante was born, the Ghibelines entirely expelled the Guelphs from its precincts, and would have razed the city to the ground, had not their leader, Farinata degli Uberti, a man of equal military skill, honor, and eloquence, protested against the barbarity. A more bitter strife still, and one pregnant with sorrow for the poet, sprang from an obscurer source. A powerful Guelph family, the Cancelliari, was divided into two branches, the Bianchi and Neri, or Whites and Blacks. Between these branches had arisen a quarrel marked with singular bitterness and atrocity even for that fierce age. All Tuscany became at last involved in the strife, and for a moment the names of Guelph and Ghibeline were forgotten in the watchwords of the new factions. Dante joined the Bianchi; the Neri were successful, and the greatest citizen of Florence, with six hundred other persons, was driven into exile, his possessions given up to pillage or confiscated, and he was sentenced, if taken, to be burnt.* Thenceforth there was no more hope for him in this world, for banishment was more bitter than death. He made several efforts to recover his standing in Florence, but without effect. For twenty-one years he found no permanent home, living at Arezzo, at Padua, at Verona, at Ravenna, or wandering as an exile through almost every part of Italy. It is said that the Florentines, after sixteen years of the poet's banishment had passed away, gave him leave to return, on the dishonorable condition of paying a fine and making a public avowal of his offence;—gave *him* leave, for whose bones their children begged again and again, through the powerful intervention of Pope Leo the Tenth, and the

* For the terms of this decree, see Tiraboschi, vol. V., part ii., p. 481.

eloquent lips of Michael Angelo, and begged in vain. These conditions by no means suited the lofty spirit of Dante. He would eagerly come as a loyal and loving citizen,—as a criminal and a slave, never. At Ravenna, where he found his last and most liberal patron, the drama of his melancholy life drew towards its last scene.

On the fourteenth of September, 1321, according to the best authorities, on the day when the Roman church celebrates the exaltation of the Holy Cross, chagrined at the failure of an embassy to Venice on behalf of his patron, and worn out with sorrow and disappointment, wrapped in the coarse garb of a friar, he lay down to die. From before his eyes this vain world was passing away. No requiems were sung; no crowds hurried through the streets to inquire how it fared with the great poet. Italy knew not her true glory; she had not begun to scatter her incense. Alone, an exile, in the palace of a friend, Guido Novello da Polenta, but not in Florence, he sunk to rest. He was ushered into that world of whose mysteries he had sung. He went to take up his abode, if hope is a true prophet,

> "With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
> Hymns devout and holy psalms
> Singing everlastingly."

After he was dead, the robe and cowl of the monk were exchanged for the vestments of the poet. His obsequies were worthily solemnized, and the mortal remains of him whom Florence had despised and vainly tried to dishonor were quietly and affectionately laid in their sepulchre, by one whose name the lovers of the poet will not let die; and the city where they repose shall attract reverent pilgrims from all lands, shall be one of the holy places of the imagination for evermore.

Among the minor works of Dante is a treatise *De Monarchia*, in which he defends the emperor against the pope,—

and two books *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, which contain a criticism on poetry, particularly the vernacular poetry of Italy. These works are in Latin. Besides these, he wrote in Italian the *Vita Nuova*, containing an account of his attachment to Beatrice, and the *Convito*, which explains at length the sense of some of his Canzoni. His sonnets have been excellently translated by Mr. Lyell. But his great work was the Divina Commedia, talked of by all, praised by the many, read and loved by the few. To this we shall chiefly confine our remarks.

One cannot read half a canto of Dante without feeling that his poem was the great and serious labor of his life; as earnest an intellectual labor, one would think, as was ever performed. By literary men, scholars, and poets, we frequently understand fine gentlemen, merry of heart and jovial in intercourse, living at their ease, quiet and happy. But Dante was neither quiet nor happy. There was no trifling upon his lips, and little gaiety in his heart. His comedy was more serious than the tragedy of most men. In his laughter there are tears :—

> "Seldom he smiled; and smiled in such a sort
> As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit
> That could be moved to smile at any thing."

What would be humour in others is, in him, concentrated to sarcasm and bitterness. His earnestness and intensity as much inform every page of his work, as Milton's sublimity does the Paradise Lost. What a sombre world he lived in! How many shadows overhung his pathway! How deep a gloom darkened the sky of Tuscany! How many of the sharp stings of faction pierced his bosom! His spirit was withdrawn from the world; he lived among men, but not of them,—forced, from very lack of sympathy, to withdraw within himself,—with a high ideal before him of the glory and power of Italy, but with no means of realizing it,—

looking out from the "loopholes of retreat," upon a degraded state, upon a degraded religion! He saw the church administered by vicious prelates; now cringing to a foreign power, now herself playing the tyrant. And Italy, that beautiful land, unrivalled in arts, in learning, in refinement, the mistress of the Great Sea, the spiritual mistress of the world, instead of growing great by harmonious counsels, rent all in pieces by the most selfish factions.

"Ah, slavish Italy! thou inn of grief!
Vessel without a pilot in loud storm!
Lady no longer of fair provinces.
But brothel-house impure! * * * *
* * * * * While now thy living ones
In thee abide not without war; and one
Malicious gnaws another; ay, of those
Whom the same wall and the same moat contains.
Seek, wretched one! around thy sea-coasts wide;
Then homeward to thy bosom turn; and mark,
If any part of thee sweet peace enjoy."

Purgatory, Canto VI., l. 76.

Emphatic words, nearly as true now as then; which might have suggested some stanzas to Byron, had any thing more been necessary to awaken the sorrow and indignation of the fiery poet, than to dwell in constant sight of so much beauty and so much oppression.

But Dante wrote as no foreigner can write, with the sorrow and bitterness of a disappointed and injured son. He knew what it was to fall from honor to ignominy. Florence, "*parvi mater amoris*," whom yet with all her faults he loved with true filial affection, cast him forth from her walls. He learned how hard are those steps which lead to a patron's door; he ate the most bitter bread, the bread of charity, doled out with reluctant hands.

The sadness with which he speaks of this banishment is very touching and very beautiful.

"Alas," said he, "had it pleased the Dispenser of the universe that the occasion of this excuse had never existed; that neither others had committed wrong against me, nor I suffered unjustly; suffered, I say, the punishment of exile and poverty; since it was the pleasure of the citizens of that fairest and most renowned daughter of Rome, Florence, to cast me forth out of her sweet bosom, in which I had my birth and nourishment even to the ripeness of my age, and in which, with her good-will, I desire with all my heart to rest this wearied spirit of mine, and to terminate the time allotted to me on earth. Wandering over almost every part to which this our language extends, I have gone about like a mendicant, showing against my will the wound with which fortune has smitten me, and which is often imputed to his ill-deserving, on whom it is inflicted. I have, indeed, been a vessel without sail and without steerage, carried about to divers ports, and roads, and shores, by the dry wind that springs out of sad poverty; and have appeared before the eyes of many, who, perhaps, from some report that had reached them, had imagined me of a different form; in whose sight not only my person was disparaged, but every action of mine became of less value, as well already performed, as those which yet remained for me to attempt."—*Life of Dante.*

It is easy to see why his poem could not have been to him merely a pleasant recreation. It was the sorrowful music of a melancholy heart. Melancholy—not ill nature, but a certain sadness and depression, from an intense view of life, its complicated relations and destiny—is, as we have been told, an attribute of every profound poetical genius. How otherwise, in a world like ours, would the poet be capable of that comprehensive sympathy which is his peculiar glory? How could he awaken those profound affections and passions which lend their life and power to tragedy? How present vividly before us those awful catastrophes, which few only are actually called to suffer, but which many imagine they see hanging before them in the dimness of the future? A profound insight into the soul, a sense of its immense capacities, its wants, its aspirations, its disappointments, its sins, its mysterious destiny,—this must sometimes press upon the mind with an almost insupportable weight. But the great poet sees all this as by intuition,—sees it magnified and

rendered intense by a domineering imagination, and feels it with that superior sympathy which is given him for his greater glory and his greater pain. It is this deeper sympathy with the melancholy phases of life, combined with a loftier enthusiasm and a more sustained power of thought, which forms one characteristic of the epic or tragic poet as distinguished from the comic; and which assign him not only a different, but a more exalted sphere. Lacking this appreciation of the sorrows of humanity, the poet may revel in wit and humor, may produce his unequalled comedy or scorching satire, but there is a broader and richer field which he can never enter; there are "glory-smitten summits of the poetic mountain" to which he can never attain.

It is a part of the poet's mission to give an intense and musical expression to the feelings and sentiments of the common heart of humanity; to catch from the world all its sombre and its gay hues, and to reflect them with different forms and wider significance; and in proportion to the universality of his genius will be his power of developing the most various phases of human experience. We count in units those who have been equally at home in the grave and the lively,—in the grandeur of lofty thought and quiet contemplation, and in the beauty of simple and artless melodies; but every poet who makes large excursions through the domain of thought and feeling must make trial of that inheritance of sorrow, of which, from his very nature, he must partake more largely than his fellows.

Homer, so full of the pomp and circumstance of glorious war, does not shut his eyes to its miseries. He shows us the hearts which it lacerates, the homes which it makes desolate, the household gods which it destroys. He leads us in with old gray-headed Priam, that we may hear the pleading of a father for the dead body of his son, and see the tears of the divine Achilles. How profoundly mournful are many of the pages of Milton! a spirit of sorrow broods over his whole

work. Spenser is continually turning one's view aside from the brighter scenes, by some picture which disposes us to contemplation, and, before we are aware, solemn thoughts come stealing over the mind, as they would if we were walking alone in a great cathedral. Even Chaucer, with all his gaiety, now and then tinges his pictures with hues more dark and foreboding; the beautiful freshness of the morning is sometimes overshadowed. And in the great dramatists, in their great master, above all, how much is there which suits the temper of grief,—expressions which supply just the word to the craving and desolate affections, to say nothing of the awful tragedies which almost crush the soul that yields to them without restraint!

But that which, in most great poets, is comparatively a subordinate, though essential characteristic, is, with Dante, one of the most prominent. He does not dally and play with sorrow as those do who have never experienced it, and who therefore covet some semblance of it as a relief from the tedium of uninterrupted enjoyment.

"Nothing so dainty sweet as lonely melancholy"

is a choice line of Beaumont and Fletcher;* but Dante never could have uttered it. His sorrow is seen, not in the fine things which he says about it, but in the whole tenor of his thoughts, the indwelling spirit of the Divine Comedy. It gave birth to those words of mingled scorn and sadness which made him feared while he was loved. It drew those solemn lines upon his face, which give so much expression and truth to the rudest image of him which the Italian stamps in glass or cuts in lava. The face of Dante is very noticeable. Coleridge once said, that all men of genius have something feminine in their expression. Whether it be so of all, we do not affirm; but over the countenance of Dante is cast a veil of

* *The Nice Valour*, Act III., Scene 3.

softness and delicacy which attempers its sternness, covers, and, if we may so speak, drives inward the sorrow which it cannot conceal.

We trust there is no need of our venturing on that most unsatisfactory of all things, the abstract of a poem, in order to make our few remarks intelligible to our readers. Of the three portions of the Divina Commedia, the Inferno has been generally considered the most powerful, as exhibiting the fresh and unwasted strength of the poet. There is, indeed, in it more of the terrible energy of his genius, more that smites the soul as with a thunderbolt; but some of the finest passages are in the other two parts, particularly in the Purgatory. The Paradise is, to our mind, too full of learning, and mysteries, and subtile discussions, for the highest poetic effect. Still, the tone of each part is so different from that of the others, and all are so manifestly necessary to complete the idea of Dante, that the objector should be cautious. We are not sure but we should return oftener to the Purgatory than to either of the other parts, the air of it is so serene. We emerge into it from all the horrors of the Inferno. The murky vapors no longer stifle us. We again behold the mild stars, and breathe freely in the clear air, and listen to the sweet words of penitence and hope.

One cannot fail to notice, on the most careless reading, the intensity of thought and feeling which pervades the whole poem. The images burn into one's heart; the woe wraps itself about the soul; yet the poet is not so great, not so terrible, as to be beyond our affections. He draws us to him by his exquisite tenderness, and by his tears makes us weep. A remarkable characteristic of Dante is his distinct delineation of character. Indeed, he does not seem to delineate so much as to create. He speaks the word, and there stand the figures, every lineament sharp and clear, every hue and expression indelible. They are struck out as a medallion is, by one blow of the hammer. Capaneus, who lies under the

burning shower which he scorns to notice, is a compact image of Milton's Satan.

"Such as I was
When living, dead such now I am. If Jove
Weary his workmen out, from whom in ire
He snatched the lightnings that at my last day
Transfixed me, if the rest he weary out,
At their black smithy laboring by turns,
In Mongibello, while he cries aloud,
'Help, help, good Mulciber!' as erst he cried
In the Phlegræan warfare; and the bolts
Launch he, full aimed at me, with all his might;
He never should enjoy a sweet revenge."

Inferno, Canto XIV.

For quiet beauty of picture, nothing can exceed those emblems graven on the rocks in Purgatory. One is David, who

"Onward came
With light dance leaping, girt in humble guise,
Israel's sweet harper; in that hap he seemed
Less, and yet more, than kingly. Opposite,
At a great palace, from the lattice forth
Looked Michael, like a lady full of scorn
And sorrow."

Another is Trajan:—

"A widow at his bridle stood, attired
In tears and mourning. Round about them trooped
Full throng of knights; and overhead in gold
The eagles floated, struggling with the wind."

Purgatory, Canto X.

The eye of the poet is clear and quick for the myriad forms of nature, the lowest and most familiar, as well as the most majestic and terrible. As an example, look at the twenty-second canto of the Inferno, where the peculators are immersed in the lake of boiling pitch.

"As dolphins that, in sign
To mariners, heave high their arched backs,
That, thence forewarned, they may advise to save
Their threatened vessel; so, at intervals,
To ease the pain, his back some sinner showed,
Then hid more nimbly than the lightning-glance."
Inferno, Canto XXII.

Every boy who has watched a frog-pond can see the truth of what follows.

"E'en as the frogs, that of a watery moat
Stand at the brink, with the jaws only out,
Their feet and of the trunk all else concealed,
Thus on each part the sinners stood; but soon
As Barbariccia was at hand, so they
Drew back under the wave. I saw, and yet
My heart doth stagger, one that waited thus,
As it befals that oft one frog remains,
While the next springs away; and Graffiacan,
Who of the fiends was nearest, grappling seized
His clotted locks, and dragged him sprawling up,
That he appeared to me an otter."—*Ib.*

Observe, too, the picture which follows. The sinner thus drawn out for new torments, by some craft, got away, and hurried to the lake of pitch. The two demons pursued, but he dived down and escaped, while they turned back enraged.

"E'en thus the waterfowl, when she perceives
The falcon near, dives instant down, while he,
Enraged and spent, retires. That mockery
In Calcabrina fury stirred, who flew
After him, with desire of strife inflamed;
And—for the barterer had 'scaped—so turned
His talons on his comrade. O'er the dike
In grapple close they joined; but the other proved
A goshawk able to rend well his foe;
And in the boiling lake both fell. The heat
Was umpire soon between them; but in vain
To lift themselves they strove, so fast were glued
Their pennons."—*Ib.*

For extreme vividness of picture, which the dullest imagination cannot help visibly portraying, we might turn to the burning tombs, square and massive, the lids half raised, in which heretics met their fate; to the vermilion towers of the city of Dis; to the split and cleft bodies of the schismatics; to the evil councillors, each "swathed in confining fire," little columns of flame, every one enveloping a sinner, as the blaze of a candle does the wick, so that these moving cones of fire, roaring and waving, filled the whole valley. And, indeed, where should we stop?

The true poetic sagacity in the use of his materials, in determining how far to venture on ground so new and so sacred, is exhibited throughout the poem, although it is very true that his boldness would not be sanctioned in our day. There is one passage in the Paradise where we think the poet shows at once his reverence and his good sense. We mean that in which he is admitted to contemplate the brightness of the Divine Majesty. One would think that he might have committed the fault of certain poets in bringing the Deity down to our form of human speech; or the grosser fault of some distinguished painters, of making some visible representation of the Eternal, Invisible Spirit; but he does not. Borne up by the prayers of Beatrice, St. Bernard, the Virgin, and all the saints, he ventured to look upward:—

"Thenceforward, what I saw
Was not for words to speak, nor memory's self
To stand against such outrage on her skill.
As one who, from a dream awakened, straight
All he hath seen forgets, yet still retains
Impression of the feeling in his dream,
E'en such am I; for all the vision dies,
As 't were, away; and yet the sense of sweet,
That sprang from it, still trickles in my heart.
Thus in the sun-thaw is the snow unsealed;
Thus in the winds on flitting leaves was lost
The Sibyl's sentence."—*Paradise*, Canto XXXIII.

If it be asked why Dante chose such a theme, and especially why, in executing his task, he dwelt so much on the terrible, why he accumulated those grotesque and hideous descriptions of physical suffering, with an ingenuity and invention never excelled, nor perhaps equalled, the answer seems to us not difficult. For a portion of the spirit of his poem, the poet is indebted to his age,—for a portion, to his own genius. Both harmonized in producing the Divine Comedy. We say, then, in reply to the question, such was the spirit of the age, and such was the peculiar genius of the poet. The age was strictly theological and ecclesiastical; learning, art, science, government, society, bore the clear impress of the church. For it philosophers wrote, art was revived, science was allowed so far, and only so far, as seemed not to conflict with ecclesiastical dogmas, while kings and queens thought it their highest honor to be styled "defenders of the faith." Now the spirit of these ideas, the very soul of the Middle Ages, is embodied in the poem.

It was not an age of merciful laws nor of mild punishments. Men were put to death for small offences,—they were immured in dungeons,—they were tortured,—they were burnt alive, without a suspicion being excited of cruelty, or of any thing but justice. Less vividness of detail, then, in the poem, less of physical suffering and more of inward and spiritual, would not have suited the rough civilization of the times. What is the pervading idea of the Divine Comedy, but that the future, the limitless future, is determined by the fleeting present; that time is enveloped by eternity;—the idea of man's destiny as extending infinitely beyond the present life,—of the utter impossibility of his fulfilling the purposes of his being in his threescore years and ten? This idea binds together in vigorous unity the three parts of the poem. Perhaps this is one reason why Dante introduces men of every clime and every age, heathen as well as Christian, so as to show the universality of religions sanctions.

What is the Inferno, but a clear, condensed, terrible assertion of retribution? Retribution is heard in every wail of every gloomy circle. What is the Purgatory, but a call to repentance, a cry for pity and forgiveness? Though false in theology, it had a lesson in it which would touch every heart,—sorrow for sin,—the possibility of pardon,—expiation. Words of encouragement float on the charmed air; hosannas are wafted to them as if from the open portals of heaven; passages of Scripture are uttered by unseen visitants.

We turn to the pilgrim's account of his entrance into the gate of Purgatory.

"Attentively I turned,
Listening the thunder that first issued forth;
And 'We praise thee, O God!' methought I heard,
In accents blended with sweet melody.
The strain came o'er mine ear, e'en as the sound
Of choral voices, that in solemn chant
With organ mingle, and now high and clear
Come swelling, now float indistinct away."

Purgatory, Canto IX.

The souls go on weeping; they are crushed and grovel on the earth; but they complain not; still there is hope for them. Five hundred years one had been there, and ages must pass before he would be purified, but he complained not; he was directing his way, however slow and sorrowful, to the "waters of peace." And when a soul *was* released, the whole mountain shook for joy.

What is the Paradise but the consummation of all good,—the triumph of infinite compassion,—the joy of redeemed, released, eternally happy spirits? They have endured the trial, and are reaping the reward in the company of the wisest and best of earth, and under guidance of the highest in heaven.

We have said that the genius of the poet suggests a still further explanation of the origin and character of the poem.

We may say of him, as the profoundest of our poets said of the earliest of our novelists:—"The energies of his soul were melancholy powers, and their path lay along the dusky dwelling-places of superstition, and fear, and death, and woe." He must have felt both the vanity and the grandeur of life; must, at any rate, have had those thoughts that "wander through eternity." He had tried to satisfy himself with the earth, and the earth had frowned upon him. He sought, with how much eagerness we know, to repose his soul, and reap his civic honors, in the city of his birth and of his love. To her he clung, a loving child, and would have found his honor and happiness in contributing to her prosperity and wisely administering her laws; but the harsh mother sternly shook him from her, and bade him elsewhere seek his fortune and his fame. To what, then, should he turn his thoughts, but to that world where the decisions of time are so often reversed, and the weary and disappointed soul may find rest?

Besides this, we know, that, in certain states of mental distress, the mind seeks relief in scenes of outward violence and danger. It demands the excitement without to allay the fever within. Men rush into battle to appease the anguish of their souls. So Shakspeare represents Lear as talking with the tempest, and finding something congenial and soothing in the pelting of the rain and the roaring of the wind. Byron, we know, loved to ride on horseback in the storm; it suited his humor. Grief instinctively seeks and finds relief in some outward manifestation of itself. It is only a sorrow which utterly crushes the heart, that is silent and tearless. Homer represents the divine Achilles as refreshing his soul with tears. "For," says Hegel,* "even in tears lies consolation. Man, when entirely absorbed in his sorrow, demands at least the outward manifestation of this inward pain. But

* We quote from a translated fragment of his Æsthetics.

the expression of these feelings by means of words, pictures, tones, and forms is still more softening; and therefore it was a good custom of the ancients to have female mourners at deaths and burials, as it brought grief into contemplation in its external form; or, more especially, as it showed the mourner his own grief expressed by others. For thus the whole subject of his sorrow would be brought under his view, and he would be compelled, by its frequent repetition, to reflect upon it, and so would be relieved. Thus abundant tears and many words have always been found the surest means of throwing off the overwhelming weight of sorrow, or at least of relieving the oppressed heart."

May there not have been some powers like these at work in Dante? He was disappointed, dishonored, impoverished, exiled; his domestic life was unhappy; for years he went about with corroding anxiety at his heart; his only inheritance was sorrow. Did he not find, in depicting the gloomy scenes of the Inferno,—those circles after circles of sorrow and woe,—some assuaging of his continual melancholy? Did not these living and fiery pictures fit well the temper of his grief, and really comfort him? There was depth in his sorrow as in his love; neither played upon the surface of his affections, but went through and through him. His laboring heart yearned to utter itself; it must do so, or he must die; and what he believed and felt so intensely he must speak with corresponding vehemence. Under the influence, too, of heavy misfortune, or in the anticipation of dreaded calamities, the mind is sometimes remarkably clear; conventional reserve is gone; the false coverings of things are stripped off; the recesses of the heart are disclosed. We are not sure but that there was a still deeper cause in the experience of the poet. Nothing great and original in literature can be produced but from one's own profound and often painful experience. Your "honest, fair, worthy, square, good-looking, well-meaning, regular, uniform, straight-forward, clock-work,

clear-headed, one-like-another, salubrious, upright kind of people" (as the author of Salmagundi calls them) have no materials in their spiritual storehouses for the beautiful or sublime structures of art. For these another sort of life is required. No such "salubrious" man was Dante. His was a soul that had warfare. He had engaged in spiritual conflicts. For him, too, there was a future world of terrible and endless sorrow, or of unspeakable felicity. He dwelt in the depths. He uttered his voice *de profundis*. Such a mind is not to be envied, but to be looked at with wonder, and reverence, and sympathy; for it was sent to this earth, not for its own enjoyment, but to give utterance to the universal hopes and fears of men, to bear a part in the great changes of society, to mark one of its epochs, to give a name and glory to a great people. Several passages in the poem, such as the marks for the seven sins drawn by the angel on his forehead as he entered Purgatory,—his rebuke by Beatrice, and subsequent repentance,—his apparently overwhelming sense of the divine justice, as well as the whole tone of both the Inferno and the Purgatory, make it seem more than possible that he had felt a deep self-condemnation, and had sought for expiation and pardon. This may have somewhat affected the style of the poem. He might perhaps have said, as Bunyan did, "I could have stepped into a style much higher than this in which I have here discoursed, and could have adorned all things more than I have seemed to do; but I dare not. God did not play, in tempting of me; neither did I play, when I sank as into a bottomless pit, when the pangs of hell caught hold upon me; wherefore I may not play, in relating of them."

Dante was a stern, just man. One cannot but admire the intrepidity, the audacity even, with which he attacks the reigning vices and crimes of the day. Neither power, nor rank, nor the church itself, shielded the criminal. Nobles and kings, monks, priests, bishops, cardinals, and popes, the very

successors of St. Peter, who once held in their hands the keys which opened and shut the kingdom of heaven, work out their penance, or suffer their endless punishment, in his scheme of justice. To consider the poem, as some once did, to be merely a covert method of taking revenge on his enemies, is not within the limits of the slenderest probability. Such littleness of spirit could not produce so grand a work. He may, indeed, for aught we know, have imposed some pains and penalties upon his relentless persecutors, as Da Vinci is said to have made Judas, in his great picture, the exact counterpart of the obnoxious prior,—and as Michael Angelo immortalized one of his troublesome enemies by putting his face on the body of a devil. He may occasionally have done something like this, for he was a man,—a man who had suffered many and grievous wrongs; but who can imagine such a vindictive spirit carried through his immortal work? Besides, some of his own kith and kin are found in the dreary rounds. His great-grandfather had been in purgatory a hundred years. His teacher Brunetto fared still worse; and Francesca, the daughter of his friend, poor Francesca, who perhaps, as Carlyle finely says, "may have sat upon the poet's knee as a bright, innocent little child," she too is "whirled away in the racking winds for ever, for ever." Dante was no coarse, vulgar, selfish man, pitifully to obtrude his private animosities into such a solemn and grand subject. We are sure of it. He had loved too deeply, had suffered too keenly, to do so. Those who imagine it have, we conceive, entirely misunderstood his noble nature; forgotten his intense patriotism, his Italian spirit, his extreme sensibility, his great wrongs through those who had wronged his country, and the recent and exciting nature of the events. The moral tone of the poem is as remarkable as any part of it. The immoralities of the age have no reflection here. Some of the scenes may be incongruous, but as a whole it is decidedly Christian. There are a few, comparatively very few, exam-

ples of grossness; but no sentence or verse, we believe not one, which offends the strictest moral purity. The same is said to be true of the Jerusalem Delivered. We fear as much cannot be said of Chaucer, or Spencer, or our old dramatists, much as we love them, while in grossness they exceed the great Italian a thousand-fold.

This great poem sprang into sudden and permanent fame, almost immediately after the death of its author. Men were anxious not only to read, but to understand it. Its dark allegories, its recondite and multifarious learning, its obscure allusions to individuals, who were often to be detected only by "their place of residence, their office, or heraldic insignia, their peculiarity of feature, or public actions,"—these all demanded explanations. The stars and the blanks must be taken out, and the true name inserted. Milan, Bologna, Venice, Pisa, and Vicenza appointed commentators at the public expense. Fifty years after the death of the poet, Florence began to perceive her ancient severity and folly, and appointed Boccaccio, "the bard of prose," to deliver discourses on her banished son. According to the too often repeated example of republics, honor and sympathy were lavished, all too late to cheer him, who, living, would have been comforted by a far more meagre tribute.

The causes of the great and sudden glory of the dead poet are found both in the nature of his subject, and in the power with which he treated it. In the first place, he most happily seized upon the belief of the times. The dogmas of the church were dominant and undisputed throughout Christendom. Purgatory was as real as heaven and hell, and all three had an intense reality both for the common and the educated mind. Few could pass directly from this world to the abodes of the blessed, for very few had kept their "garments so unspotted from the world" as to need no future purification. In the worlds of pain were their fathers, their sons. They themselves, perhaps, were travelling thither. The low wailing

which startled them in their dreams,—did it not come from their suffering kinsfolk? Voices and sounds heard in the dark night,—were they not inarticulate supplications for prayer? Every day men were shut up in purgatory for their sins; every day they were delivered from the fire through the intervention of the church. There was an institution then on earth which reached its arms into the invisible world, which held the keys of heaven in its own hands. There were saints in heaven of one's own kin and family, who but yesterday were here, and now, mighty with God in heaven, the just and proper objects of human prayer. There were men in hell, excommunicated and sent there by the terrible authority of an incensed pontiff. The future world was bound to the present by ties the most awful. Hence, to write of that world, and to write with the vividness of the great Italian, was to give the solemnity of truth even to the fiction, and to threats and predictions the sanctity of prophecy. He individualized and rendered definite and particular what the church, in all her teachings, affirmed in general. The monk proclaimed to the listening assembly the terrible retribution which awaited the incorrigible,—the unquenchable fire, the undying worm; but the poet uncovered the abyss beneath their very feet, and bade them look upon the flaming sepulchres, the lake of burning pitch, the rivers of blood, the frozen seas, the vermillion towers of the city of Dis. Purgatory was no longer to be an indistinct region, for he had shown them the mount rising far away in the distant ocean, with its top almost touching the heavens. And the abodes of the blessed,—they saw them every day, every night. The mild stars which cheered the wayfarer or guided the mariner, the queen of evening, the king of day, were made more beautiful, and were looked upon with a human sympathy, because they were the actual dwelling-places of all that was pure, and good, and great.

The extreme vividness of the poet's descriptions and details

touched the curiosity of every Italian. Although necessarily didactic, he borrows the vivacity of the drama, and not so much tells us what took place, as leads us with him, bids us open our ears and hear, and our eyes and see. One might almost make a map of his travels, from the hour when Virgil meets him in the "gloomy wood," to the time when St. Bernard makes in his behalf the last and greatest request; and the whole "vision," even to the thirty-third canto of the Paradise, be a sort of splendid road-book through those unexplored regions. We should not be much surprised to learn that he was interrogated by some of his countrymen for further information, just as Sir Thomas More is said to have been respecting his Utopia. There is an air of common life thrown over even his grandest scenes, which makes them seem natural and true. No metaphor or comparison is out of place with him. Whatever illustration will make the scene more vivid and distinct, how homely soever it be, he does not hesitate to use, because he is writing not to be admired, but to be understood and felt. Hence, he calls in all the aids of memory, of sights and sounds, of common life as well as of learning. His quick eye saw everything, his ready wit appropriated all to his service. Pigs scampering away from the sty, meat boiling up in the pot, the shepherd with his flock, the "eastern sky all roseate,"—images repulsive, or full of beauty and gracefulness, are chosen with equal freedom, when they suit his purpose of presenting a distinct picture.

Charon, "that grim ferryman that poets write of," could not have been portrayed with more vividness by Michael Angelo;—"an old man, hoary white with eld," with "shaggy cheeks, and eyes of burning coal." Cerberus, the cruel triple-headed monster, is more distinct than in Virgil.

> "His eyes glare crimson, black his unctuous beard,
> His belly large, and clawed the hands with which
> He tears the spirits, flays them, and their limbs
> Piecemeal disparts."—*Inferno*, Canto VI.

It is needless to multiply examples of what is so evident. "Michael Angelo," says Coleridge, "is said to have made a design for every page of the Divine Comedy."

Another cause of the rapid and wide-spread fame of the poem is, no doubt, to be found in the individual interest inspired by the poet's narration, and the proximity of many events which are commemorated, to Dante's own time. He is no fictitious being, who is describing fictitious joys and woes. He invokes no Muse to make revelations, but only to help him remember and tell what he saw. He details the battles and wanderings of no fabulous Achilles or Æneas; but he himself, Dante Alighieri, sometime citizen and magistrate of the renowned city Florence, had gone bodily through the gloomy kingdom of despair, and up even to the tenth heaven. He makes your flesh creep on your bones, and your blood curdle and freeze; yet not as a romancer would, but as one who should depict the carnage of a terrible battle, or the tortures of the Inquisition. He was not relating amusing or fearful stories, but telling in plain language what he saw with his own eyes and heard with his own ears. Marco Paulo, just returned to Venice from Tartary and China, had travelled far and seen wonderful things, but not so wonderful as these, for "*he* was the man who had been in hell;" and Marco Paulo could not narrate the marvels of China and Japan with more gravity, and with an air of more sober verity, than he did the events of *his* pilgrimage, albeit he told them in the language of poetry. He himself had read the gloomy inscription on the dusky portal of the world of sorrow. He had been ferried "over the livid lake." He had climbed up the shaggy back of Lucifer. Not a score of years had passed since those walked the earth and did business with their fellows, who now were frozen in seas of ice, or burning in molten pitch, or praising God in heaven,—and he had seen them there. He had actually seen Farinata degli Uberti rising up in his burning sepulchre,

"but changing not his countenance stern,
Nor moving the neck, nor bending his ribbed side,"

as if "in high scorn he held e'en hell;" and close beside him, "peering forth from the unclosed jaw," "leaning upon his knees upraised," Cavalcante Cavalcanti. And who was Farinata, but a distinguished general and statesman, by whom, only five years before Dante's birth, Florence itself had been taken, and by whose nobleness it had been saved from destruction? And who was Cavalcante, but a distinguished Florentine,—and both of them as well known to the contemporaries of the poet as Jefferson and Burr are to us? The Ugolino whom he interrupted in his horrid repast was the very one who, when Dante was twenty-four years old, had been starved to death with his children, "unshrived by priest or friar," in the vaults of that tower at Pisa which ever after was called the Tower of Famine. And Beatrice, who led him through Paradise, was the very Beatrice, known to half Florence, who was the early and sole idol of his heart.

It is generally thought necessary to lay the scenes of a poem in a distant age, so that the imagination shall not be shackled, and the broad light of actual fact shall not dispel the splendid illusions of our poetic dreams. But Dante derived an advantage from the very familiarity and publicity of his personages, in respect to the vivid reality of the impression; while his plan did not compel him to dwell long upon an individual, allowed him to seize those few events in his life which were capable of being presented with poetic effect and at any moment, by commanding the presence of some ancient hero or martyr, he could temper the broad daylight of familiar facts with the sombre and mingling shadows of evening. The power of the imagination is none the less real because we know that the scenes portrayed by it are fictitious. The Mysteries of Udolpho would be no more agitating, if we were assured that every part of the story was as true as Hume's History, or a great deal truer. We might learn from

it different lessons; we might form different opinions of the virtues and vices of the age; but, if any thing, we should be less startled, because the "Mysteries" would be in a great measure dissipated; there would be less room for the monstrous and shapeless images of terror to stalk abroad in the dim twilight; the power of the narration does not depend upon its truth or falsity, but on the heartiness of the assent which we yield to the demand on our sensibilities. The imagination requires congruity, and not absolute fact; and we demand of the poet that he should be an artist, a *poet*, and not a historian, or biographer, or annalist. This mighty power of the imagination Dante brought to bear upon the most solemn realities. We know the strong tendency of the mind to form some picture of the future state,—to render definite those dim and vague phantoms which oppress a guilty soul, as well as the visions of joy which comfort the penitent. The poet satisfied those strong yearnings of the common heart. He interpreted its feelings; its dumb voice spake; its blind eye saw. Henceforth, the picture of the eternal world, whether portrayed by the painter, or half conceived by the vulgar and common fancy, must be formed according to the pattern shown by the sombre genius of the exiled Florentine.

In the profound and various intellect and the ever-sympathizing heart of the poet are to be found the great causes of the lasting honor of the poem. It is a creation of his genius, not a mechanical aggregation. An inward light guided him on to immortality. We can see, even now, that serious face, that placid, introverted eye, that hollow cheek, that lip which *would* curl, that chin which *would* quiver, under the concentrated bitterness, not of envy and malignity, but of disappointment and distress. The actors in the busy and turbulent scenes of his day have been dead these six hundred years. The republics have been in their graves almost as long. The great families which reaped the honors

of the state, and with their deadly feuds made every town the scene of intestine war, have become extinct, and the age itself is, to the common reader, almost fabulous; but the Divine Comedy is still the great poem of Italy. Still must men wonder at, and admire, and love that mighty and sorrowful spirit, to whom, for wise ends, it was given to sing of hell, and purgatory, and paradise. Perhaps without him Milton would never, with more perfect art and a purer theology, have attempted a loftier, if not more touching, theme. But for him, Michael Angelo, a sombre and kindred genius, might never have left the record of his thoughts and feelings in the sublimest and most awful scene that the pencil ever portrayed.

We may seem, in our brief review, to have been indiscriminate in our praise, and to have forgotten our duty of critics. In truth, we have not been careful to pick out the foibles and faults, where there is so much to command our enthusiasm and love. It would not be difficult to speak of the grotesqueness and occassional grossness of the Inferno; to condemn the mingling of Christian truth with heathen fiction; to revive some old charge of ill-nature in the poet. We might doubtless have found traces of obstinate pride, of fiery temper, of sarcastic wit. All these he had by nature; and what wonder, if, in his adverse lot, they sometimes got the better of him? But we have not time for such criticism, and it would do our hearts little good to engage in it. The faults in temper, in taste, in art, in morals (if there are any), have long since, for all practical effect, sunk to the bottom, while the beautiful and the good are borne on the full current by our doors, for our blessing. Some, we know, do not see these beautiful and good gifts. The waters are to them always turbid, and the stream itself is neither wide nor deep. That in the poet which is earthy they detect, with the true sagacity of earthworms; that which is divine they see not. They compare him with others only to find a deficiency. He is not so

simple and natural as Homer, not so polished as Virgil, not so sublime as Milton, not so universal and healthful as Shakspeare. It may be not; but let us love him for what he has, not neglect him for what he has not. All men of genius have not the same gifts, nor the same glory. We may forget that in him which reminds us of the earth, dust, and ashes of our humanity, and cling to that which savors of the ethereal, as a unique and immortal possession. By looking coldly or carelessly upon him, it is ourselves that we injure, and not him. He who has been growing great with the reverence of centuries, and is yet a modern, will receive little injury in his fame by our censure; but we may lose much by our lack of sympathy. If we look in Dante for choice phrases, and delicate words, and the gems of the lyric, we shall most likely be disappointed; for these are not his peculiarity. He had in a measure to form his language. He found it rude, amorphous; he stamped upon it an immortal signature of genius. He doubted whether he should not write in Latin. Happily, he did not; but we must not be surprised, if, with all the plainness and directness of thought, his expressions are many times inverted and obscure. But let us look for the intense feeling, the affluent imagination, the brilliant and varied fancy, the endless invention, and the great spirit which broods over and informs the whole, and we cannot be mistaken or disappointed. What, of all the products of the *thought* of his time, has come down to us, comparable to his poem? Something of the form and spirit of every great poet, as we have said, belongs to his own age and nation. We cannot relish Homer, or Sophocles, just as the Greeks did who heard the Iliad chanted at their festivals, and saw the Œdipus Tyrannus at the theatre, because the spirit of ancient art is diverse from that of the modern. Not even Chaucer or Spenser seem to us just as they did to their contemporaries. We cannot so inwrap ourselves in antiquity, that our thoughts, our sentiments, our spirit shall be ancient.

Something of the spirit of every great poet is eternal. He unlocks the fountains of tears or of joy, which are peculiar to no nation, to no age. The glories of Achilles, and the sorrows of Priam, are not the property of time. Homer and Sophocles, Chaucer and Spencer, are our friends. They are not antiquated,—their hearts are not; and, with all the great brotherhood of poets, they are linked to us by the golden chain of sympathies and affections. A great poet *is* the greatest of gifts to any people. He remains ever with us to inspire and instruct. He opens to us new worlds; of our dim imaginings makes clear and palpable realities; gives us new sources of pleasure; draws us up from pursuits whose end is our present physical comfort, to clearer, calmer, more lofty and spiritual joys and hopes. There are hopes which take hold on eternity, fears which chill the heart, passions which scorch and wither the soul, and no words to give them utterance. There they lie in the common heart,—dim, unrecognized, half-formed. The all-sympathising poet, by a magic word, unlocks the imprisoned sympathies and bids them be free. To our dull eyes the earth is a desert, or a field for common toil; but he touches our eyes, and earth and sky are apparelled in glory. We remember our forgotten dreams. We think again of our nature and our destiny.

"Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

"The appointed aim of art," says Hegel, "is to awake and give vitality to all slumbering feelings, affections, and passions; to fill and expand the heart, and to make man, whether developed or undeveloped, feel in every fibre of his being *all* that human nature can endure, experience, and bring forth in her inmost and most secret recesses; *all* that has power to move and arouse the heart of man in its profoundest depths, manifold capabilities, and various phases; to garner up for our enjoyment whatever, in

the exercise of thought and imagination, the mind discovers of high and intrinsic merit, the grandeur of the lofty, the eternal, and the true, and present it to our feeling and contemplation. In like manner, to make pain and sorrow, and even vice and wrong, become clear to us; to bring the heart into immediate acquaintance with the awful and the terrible, as well as with the joyous and pleasurable; and, lastly, to lead the fancy to hover gently, dreamily, on the wings of imagination, and entice her to revel in the seductive witchery of its voluptuous emotion and contemplation. Art should employ this manifold richness of its subject-matter to supply, on the one hand, the deficiencies of our actual experience of external life, and, on the other hand, to excite in us those passions which shall cause the actual events of life to move us more deeply, and awaken our susceptibility for receiving impressions of all kinds."—*Æsthetik*, B. 1.

Those who are gifted with the highest power of art come not often. The song of Dante for these five hundred years has been touching the hearts of men, and it is as fresh as at the beginning. When shall its melody die away, "be lost in silence and forgot?"

We might dwell much more minutely on the lessons, some of them very practical, to be drawn from this poem, and inquire how far it exhibits the learning of the age, the astrology, astronomy, natural philosophy, and theology; how far, remarkable as it is for historical accuracy, it gives the true public spirit of the times, and the general belief and practice of the Roman church; or, in literature, how far the genius of the poet tended to awaken that of Petrarch and Boccaccio (both of whom were born before he died), and hastened that revival of learning, so efficient ultimately in breaking the chains of the Popish hierarchy; and, paramount to all, might we dwell on the abundant lessons which those ill-governed states transmit to us. But these and kindred topics would draw us much beyond any reasonable limits.

The ashes of Dante still rest at Ravenna. The urn which once contained them, and on which was engraved the memorial which he himself penned,—

> "Hic claudor Dantes patriis extorris ab oris,
> Quem genuit parvi Florentia mater amoris,"—

that urn is gone, and a rich tomb has taken its place. His cenotaph is to be seen in Santa Croce, the august mausoleum of the greatest and best Florentines,—of Galileo, Michael Angelo, Machiavelli, and Alfieri; and his name and fame are among the very richest legacies which the turbulent days of the republics have left, not to Italy alone, but to the world.

It is with pleasure that the editor is enabled to attach to the preceding article the following beautiful lines by Uhland, translated from the German by John Edward Taylor.*

DANTE'S LOVE.

Was it fair Florence, from thy gate,
Or from heaven's doors the festive throng,
With haste, impatient to await
The drowsy daylight, pass'd along?

And children, all as angels fair,
In smiling bands, with garlands crown'd,
Flew to the Dale of Roses—there
To lead the joyous dance around.

There Dante, 'neath a laurel's shade,
Reclined, fair youth of nine short years,
When soon along the merry glade
His angel, Beatrice, appears.

As in the passing zephyr's sigh,
The rustling boughs above him move,
Dante's young soul, scarce conscious why,
Thrilled to the first soft breath of love.

* Extracted, by permission, from an interesting collection of "Translations from the German, Prose and Verse, by Henry Reeve and John Edward Taylor."

From that same hour, within his breast
The spring of poetry arose;
And in the mazy streams of verse
The secret of his passion flows.

It passed: again in riper years
And statelier grace she meets his eyes;
His muse now loftier honours bears,
Like trees that bloom in Paradise.

From Florence gates once more the throng,
But not to festive measures, wend;
In mournful pomp they move along,
And heavy sounds their steps attend.

Beneath a sable mantle's gloom,
With white cross deck'd the maiden lay;
So early gather'd to the tomb,
They bore his Beatrice away.

And as the shades of evening fell,
Dante sat silent and alone;
He hid his face—the distant bell
Fell on his ear with sullen tone.

But grief soon hurries him along
To the deep shades of forest dells,
And evermore his sadden'd song
Sounds like those death-proclaiming bells.

While thus, by restless passion driven,
His solitary way he went,
A messenger appear'd from heaven,
An angel Beatrice had sent.

He led the youth with faithful care
Through hell's dark realms of pain and woe;
Where, amid scenes of fell despair,
His tears forgot the while to flow.

Then upward to the gates of light,
Aloft by devious paths they rove,
Where to his unexpectant sight
Comes Beatrice to meet her love.

Higher and higher still they rise,
Love to their spirit wings has given,
While she with fixed uplifted eyes
Gazes upon the sun of heaven.

But Dante with averted eye,
Resting on her with ravish'd sight,
There view'd reflected from on high,
The splendour of the eternal light.

And Dante wrote his wondrous love
With fire strokes nothing can efface,
As on the rock the brand of Jove
Graves its imperishable trace.

Then to his muse, of heavenly birth,
Well may the name divine be given,
Who raised his Beatrice from earth,
To shed on man the love of heaven.

PETRARCH.*

"Anzi questo io non taccio, che io, di quel poco, ch' io sono, tale mi sono per quella donna, e che, se ho pur qualche fama o gloria, a ciò non sarei mai pervenuto, se la sementa tenuissima di virtù, che la natura avea posto nell' animo mio, ella non l' avesse coltivata con sì nobili affetti."†

THE political state of Italy during the early part of the middle ages, although highly favorable to the development of mind, offered no advantages for secluded study. The war of the Investitures had been closely followed by the invasion of Frederic Barbarossa, and the war of the league of Lombardy. It was during this last, that the minds of the Italians, actively engaged in the defence of their rights, received an impulse and development, whose influence continued long after the freedom in which they originated had been madly sacrificed. But these exertions were accompanied by scenes of horror and woe, which chill the blood even at the distance of seven centuries; and the domestic life of the leading men of those times presents a picture of which we, surrounded by

* *Francisci Petrarchæ Florentini, Philosophi, Oratoris et Poetæ clarissimi, reflorescentis literaturæ, Latinæque Linguæ, aliquot Seculis horrenda Barbarie inquinatæ ac pene sepultæ, Assertoris et Instauratoris, Opera quæ extant omnia, &c, &c.* Basileæ, per Sebastianum Henrichetri.

† Quoted from "Memorie della Vita di Francesco Petrarca ch'egli stesso ne lasciò scritte nelle opere sue latine." Edited by Giuseppe Molini.

all the delicacies and comforts and securities of life, can form no adequate conception.*

Still the literary spirit of the age continued its train of constant, though slow advancement. The love of study spread by degrees from the convent to the court, and at length penetrated the retirement of domestic life. Amid the exciting cares of conquest, and even in the gloom of a prison, princes sought relief or relaxation in the cultivation of science; and private individuals, borne away by the same enthusiasm, neglected their more lucrative professions for the enjoyment of intellectual pursuits.†

The human mind seems at first to have assumed a new form of conception, and the poetry which could not find full and permanent expressions in the rude phrases of an unformed dialect, embodied its conceptions in the beautiful and sublime of a noble architecture. Then arose the daring dome, the frowning battlement, the dark pile of the cathedral, in which wild imagination and bold design mark out so clearly the epoch of their formation.‡

The poetry of language soon followed and lingered for a time in the song of the Troubadours, and the minstrels of Sicily. Then suddenly passing into the nobler tongue of Tuscany, it became once more the language of nature, the expression of the overflowing feelings of the heart, the embodying of the bright and glowing forms that float before the eye of fancy. Foremost in the train we meet the daring

* Among the protectors of literature during the fourteenth century, we find men not less remarkable for their vices than for their ambition. So that the zeal which they displayed, seems to have proceeded more directly from their love of magnificence, than from their love of letters; a proof of the general esteem in which literature was held.

† A remarkable instance of this is related in one of Petrarch's letters. V. Mem. pour la Vie de Petrarque, Tom ii. p. 486. aſ, Tirab.

‡ V. Histoire Littéraire de la France, Vol. XVI. Discours sur l'état des Beaux Arts au treizième siecle.

genius of Dante, and the tones of his lyre have hardly died upon the ear, when we catch the soft strain of the lute of Petrarch.

The defeat of the Bianchi party of Florence, in 1302, was followed by the banishment of its leading members.* Among these were Dante and the father of Petrarch. For a long time they indulged the hope of a recall, and they seem to have first sought a refuge in the vicinity of Florence, either with a view to assist the efforts of their friends, or to avail themselves of them, if successful. It was probably this circumstance which first led them to Arezzo, and it was here that Petrarch was born in the second year of his father's exile. On the very night of his birth, the banished party attempted to force an entrance into Florence. The effort failed, and so far from increasing the chances of return, it completely alienated the affections of their few remaining friends. Still the father of Petrarch lingered around Florence with all an exile's fondness, and it was not until the bitter experience of seven years had forced upon his conviction the vanity of his hopes, that he was able to tear himself from his native land. He then retired to Avignon, where the residence of the Papal Court had drawn immense crowds of the ambitious or discontented of Italy. He here engaged in the profession which he had originally pursued in Florence; and, unable to keep his son in the crowded city of Avignon, he placed him at the school of Carpentras, a small town in its neighborhood. Petrarch here not only followed the usual course of elementary studies, but soon completing his grammar

* V. Tirab. Vol. V. p. 443. et seq.

Petrarch de orig. et vit. passim.

Squarzafichi, vit. Fr. Petrar. Petr. oper. edit. Basl.

Mem. de l' Académie des Inscriptions, Vol. XV. p. 746. et seq. XVII. 390. et seq.

Besides these professed biographies, there are many highly interesting facts scattered through the letters of Petrarch, and some in his Dial. de Cont. Mund. and in other parts of his works.

and rhetoric, advanced to the higher classes of Latin. His fondness for study and readiness in learning led his friends to form great expectations of his success, and, accordingly, as soon as his age would permit, his attention was directed to the study of law, as the surest path to wealth and honor. But fortunately for posterity, Petrarch had already acquired too strong and decided a taste for polite letters, to permit his mind to engage with any degree of pleasure in the subtle distinctions of the codes.* It was not surprising, therefore, that although placed first at the school of Montpelier, then at that of Bologna, and allured by some interesting points in the study itself, he should pursue it with aversion, and seize the first opportunity of quitting it for ever. The death of his father, which is placed by some writers about the year 1326, is supposed to have been the immediate cause of his return to Avignon; and there, having no guide but his own inclination, he abandoned every study for his favorite pursuits. But unhappily for the freedom of his choice, his small inheritance had been shamefully wasted by his father's executors, and he soon found it necessary to direct his thoughts to some additional source of revenue. With this view he entered the church, and assumed the clerical robe. But the path of ecclesiastical duty offered no more allurements than he had previously found in the study of law, and although he enjoyed the protection of the Colonnas, he never advanced far in the honors of the church.

This portion of the life of Petrarch has been enlarged upon by all who have undertaken his history; and some of his biographers seem to have believed that the passion for Laura was almost the only important event of his life. In one point of view it is undoubtedly interesting; for it exerted a powerful influence over a great part of his life, and gave

* One of his biographers attributes this passion to an emulation excited by the writings of Dante, which were then beginning to attract the notice of the learned.—Squarzafichi, vit. Petr. p. 2.

rise to the Italian poems by which he is chiefly known. It is difficult to conceive the warmth and constancy of this passion, and were there no other evidence of its reality than the testimony of his verses, we could almost pardon those who view it as a poetic fiction. But the same tone of feeling which characterizes the Canzoniere, extends to his letters and dialogues, and a large portion of his other works. We have not at present any means of ascertaining with what feelings he first met its approach. But he was not long in perceiving that it was destined to prove destructive of his peace; and the unsettled state of his mind, the alternate mixture of hope and fear by which he was constantly tormented, are evident as much from the manner of his life, as from the tone of his verses.* It was not, however, by a weak abandonment of his duties that the power of his passion was manifested, for he pursued his studies and continued the cultivation of his mind with unrelaxing industry. But the constant change of residence, the frequent attempts to tear himself from Avignon, where, however, he constantly returned, the tender strain of thought which ran through all his writings, were clear indications of a 'heart ill at ease.'

The first of his tours was made in company with his friend and patron James Colonna, to the Bishopric of Lombes.†

* Readers who are desirous of re-examining this oft-examined question, will find one of the prevalent opinions strongly supported in the Mem. de l' Acad. cited above. In another (we believe the 16th vol. of the same work), the opinion of the Abbe de Sade is supported in a very ingenious essay upon Laura. The Abbe's opinion (v. Mem. pour la Vie de Petrarque) has been adopted by Tiraboschi and other celebrated critics. But early in the present century it was violently attacked by Lord Woodhouselee. We have not been able to procure his essay, but from a few extracts that we have seen, we should suppose that his lordship knew more of the spirit of Petrarch, than of that of Petrarch's age.

† It has been asserted that it was during this tour that Petrarch first became acquainted with the Provençal poetry; but his long residence in a part of France not far distant from the seat of Provençal literature,

After passing a summer in that place, where the solitude of the situation was enlivened by the society of his friends Lelius and Socrates, he again returned to Avignon. There he remained tranquil for near three years, eagerly embracing every occasion to extend his information, not only by means of books, but of the society that was constantly gathered around his patron. He thus became acquainted with Richard of Bury, tutor and ambassador of Edward III., and with many other distinguished men, whose correspondence long continued to form one of the chief pleasures of his life. The conversation of these friends may perhaps have concurred with the unsettled state of his mind in forming the taste for travelling, which nothing but the infirmities of old age could ever overcome.

About three years after his return from Lombes, he made a tour through the north of France, the Netherlands, and along the Rhine, and while absent communicated to his friends the course and events of this journey, in letters which now form one of the most interesting portions of his correspondence.* He next directed his steps towards Italy, and the true feeling of Italian pride breaks out in the delight with which he says, that wherever he wandered and whatever he saw, he found nothing to make him ashamed of his native land. For a time his passion for travelling was satisfied, and, purchasing a small cottage at Vaucluse, in the neighborhood of Avignon, he arranged his library there, and established himself in that solitude.

He now engaged in his studies with the ardor of youth. He was at a distance from the world, and received no interruptions from the cares of society, while the monotony of solitude was cheered by the occasional visits of his friends. Every hour was a succession of delightful occupations. He

could hardly have left him in ignorance of a poetry that had already spread throughout Italy itself.

* V. Famil. Lib. I. ep. 3, 4.

turned from the grave composition of his moral treatise, to study his eclogues or epistles. The retirement of the closet was relieved by the fresh air of the valley, and the thousand thoughts and images that rose from his peculiar situation, and from the sweet aspect that nature wore around him, were recorded upon his tablets, and at length formed into the tender verses of the Canzoniere. Here he composed the greatest part of his early sonnets and odes. Many of his letters were written from here, and beside the Latin dialogues and moral treatises, he here commenced his great epic, the poem of Africa.*

Thus far the reputation of Petrarch, although not confined to the immediate circle of his friends, had been an indefinite expectation of future excellence, rather than the fruit of some superior production. For it should not be forgotten that the sonnets and odes by which he is chiefly known in modern times, were but little esteemed by the grave and learned of the age for which he wrote. Not so with the younger portion of society, and especially with those who felt, or wished to feel, the passion which he has so truly depicted. They were

* The letter from which we obtain these facts was written in reply to a friend, who had attempted to dissuade him from returning to Vaucluse.

After several observations, he adds the following:—"Quod idcirco dixerim, ne quis dubitet, me illius rus non spernere, quod mihi, meisque rebus aptissimum semper inveni, ubi sæpe curas urbanas, rustica requie permutavi, quod non tantum electione ipsa, sed agrestibus muris et (ut spero) solidiore cemento, verbis atque carminibus illustrare pro viribus studui. Illic, juvat enim meminisse, Africam meam cœpi, tanto impetu, tantoque nisu animi, ut nunc limam per eadem referens vestigia, ipse meam audaciam et magna operis fundamenta, quodammodo, perhorrescam. Illic et epistolarum utriusque styli, partem non exiguam et pene totum Bucolicum carmen absolvi, quam brevi dierum spatio si noris, stupeas."—*Fam. Lib.* VIII. ep. 3.

Another writer goes still further:—"Illic denique quicquid fere omni ætate composuit aut præfecit aut incepit, aut scribere cogitavit, eo fuit in loco."—*Vergerius apud Squarzaf.* p. 3.

also spreading rapidly through the lower classes, changing, it is true, and losing a part of their original polish and beauty, as they passed from mouth to mouth among a rude peasantry, but silently forming for their author that far-spread and flattering reputation, which seems to be the peculiar lot of Italian and Grecian poets.

But the poem of Africa, in which he was engaged, raised the expectation of his contemporaries to the highest pitch, and upon this he also for a long time placed his hopes of permanent reputation. The first verses were hardly known, when the attention of the learned, and of the patrons of learning, became wholly directed to the valley of Vaucluse.* And long before the work was completed, the Senate of Rome sent him an invitation to receive the laurel crown upon the Capitol. While he was yet agitated by the joy of this unexpected honor, a letter from a friend in Paris urged him to accept the same high reward from the university of that city. He hesitated for some time between these two invitations, but the advice of his friend Colonna concurring with his own veneration for the Roman name, at length decided him in favour of the former.†

It was a glorious moment, not for him alone, but for the literature, the genius of all ages, when the Roman Senate, renewing for a moment its long associations with all that is noble in genius or daring in enterprise, placed the wreath of

* The wonder and admiration, which the mere intention of writing a poem excited among the scholars of that age, will seem strange to an age like ours, so well accustomed to the appearance of heroics, that number volumes instead of books. But according to Tiraboschi, this was not the case with our unfortunate forefathers.—"Un poema," says he, "a quell' età era una cosa si rara che doveva destare ammirazione verso l'autore in chiunque udivane il nome. Quindi appena ne corse la fama mentre Petrarca non aveane fatta che piccola parte, e appena vedute le altre Latine poesie da lui composte, egli divenne l'ogetto dell' universale maraviglia e per poco non fu creduto un uomo divino."

† Op. Tom. III. p. 3. Tirab. V. p. 455.

laurel on the brow of Petrarch. The dark clouds which hung so thickly over the moral and political horizon, seemed for an instant to break away, and the shout of the thousands who crowded around the Capitol, and filled the avenues of the Forum, might have seemed the voice of reviving Rome: reviving, not to roll the dripping wheels of the triumphal car along the steep of the Capitol; not to suspend a new shield or lance at the shrine of Capitolinus; but to place upon the bloodless brow of genius the reward of victories, gained in the pure field of intellectual exertion, over the ignorance and wildness of a barbarous age.

From this time Petrarch resided more constantly in Italy. His reputation procured him the friendship of princes and republics, as well as of men of letters.* There was hardly a court that did not seek to allure him by the most favorable offers. The republic of Florence endeavored to engage him in her new university by the proffer of any chair that he might deign to fill: the Emperor Charles IV. favored him with his correspondence, and sought to establish him at his court. He was invited by Innocent XVI. to become apostolic secretary, a post to which he had been previously called by Clement VI. This pontiff had also held out for him the additional allurements of ecclesiastical advancement. But, too fond of his freedom to submit to the confinement of public employment, he passed from city to city, and from court to court,—now simply seeking to gratify his private attachment, and now charged with the embassy of some Italian prince.† Twice he attempted to act as mediator between the rival republics of Genoa and Venice; he averted the impending wrath of Charles IV. from his friend and

* V. Tiraboschi, Vol. V. Lib. I. cap. 2, passim.

† It is worthy of remark, that many of the principal Italian scholars were employed in the most important embassies. Without counting Machiavelli, who was a professed politician, Dante alone is said to have been fourteen times ambassador.

protector the Visconti. By his eloquent expostulations, he partly prevailed upon one pontiff to remove the papal chair to Rome, and contributed powerfully to prepare the mind of another for the same change. Were we to follow his history through all the details of this period, we should be led from court to court, we should be obliged to enumerate all the literary enterprises of the age, the search and restoration of ancient manuscripts, the spread and cultivation of Greek letters, the introduction of pure taste into the study of antiquity, the application of reason and criticism to the examination of ancient monuments; and descending to minuter details, the history of many inferior undertakings, of which he was the origin and the soul. We must, however, confine ourselves for the present to a single anecdote, which illustrates, in a very forcible manner, the estimation in which Petrarch was held by his contemporaries.*

While he was receiving his public examination at the court of King Robert of Naples, a schoolmaster of Pontremoli, blind and enfeebled by age, hastened to Naples in order to see him. Petrarch had already started for Rome, but the report of so extraordinary an occurrence spread rapidly through the city, and soon reached the ears of the king. It was natural that so great a lover of letters should be struck with this burst of enthusiasm, and after having received a confirmation of the story from the lips of the old man himself, he supplied him with some conveniences for his journey, and urged him to hasten towards Rome, where he might, perhaps, be in time to satisfy his curiosity. But here, also, the poor old man was too late, for Petrarch had already started for France. He returned to Pontremoli almost

* There is a curious statement in a letter of Petrarch, written in reply to the invitation to become Secretary to Innocent XVI., by which we learn that while he received almost divine honors from some, he was thought little better than a magician by others. Vid. Rer. Sen. L. I. Ep. 3.

broken-hearted with his disappointment, but had hardly reached home, when he was told that Petrarch, instead of returning to Avignon, had stopped at Parma. Not discouraged by his former disappointment he again set out to seek him, and crossing the Apennines through snow and cold, with no support but the arm of his son and of one of his scholars, he at length reached the house in which Petrarch was lodged. It would be impossible to describe the rapture with which he embraced him, listening with ecstacy to every word that he uttered, and alternately kissing the hand that had written, and the head that had composed such noble verses.* After having passed three days in the enjoyment of his society, the old man returned home joyful and contented.†

The mind of Petrarch had always been open to religious impressions, and even in the earlier periods of his attachment to Laura, he seems to have sought relief from his sorrows in the offices of devotion. This feeling continued to gain strength as he advanced in age, and many letters, composed during the last years of his life, bear witness to the resigned and tranquil mind with which he viewed the approach of death. His studies at this period were divided between the classics of Greece and Rome, and the works of the fathers; for his strong mind, while deeply impressed with the truths of religion, was raised far above the narrow bigotry which can see no traces of its Maker in the productions of a Pagan. His application to study was never relaxed while he had strength to bear the exertion. To borrow his own words, he

* Et quotiens putas, sed quid loquor, praesens rebus intereras, quotiens filii et discipuli alteriùs, quo pro filio et quibus ambobus pro vehiculo utebatur, manibus sublatis, meum caput osculatus est, quo illa cogitassem, quotiens hanc dexteram qua illa scripsissem, quibus se diceret vehementissime delectatum. Rer. Sen. ut sup.

† This anecdote is related by Petrarch himself in a letter to one of his friends, in which he attempts to prove that the love of letters does not pass unrewarded in their age. Vid. Rer. Sen. Lib. XV. ep. 7.

hastened his steps as he drew nearer to the goal, and believing that much still remained to be done, while his increasing infirmities reminded him, from hour to hour, how small a space remained for labor, he allowed to sleep and relaxation only that time which the weakness of nature imperiously demanded. He arose at midnight, to pray and study, and divided the day between religion and literature. But his debility and disease daily increased. Frequent fevers slowly undermined his strength, and his body seemed to sink under him from hour to hour; but still his mind grew brighter and brighter, and his imagination purer and purer, as sense faded within him. At length, on the morning of the eighteenth of July, 1374, he was found dead in his study, seated in his chair, with his head reposing as in meditation upon the pages of a book.*

The Italian poems of Petrarch can never be correctly estimated, until some poet shall arise, who, possessing the same depth and purity of feeling, can transfuse into the most harmonious form of his native language, the grace and sweetness of the original verses. Until then, the enjoyment of the Canzoniere must be confined to the native Italian, and to the few who enter enough into the spirit of the language, to catch the feeling of the original as well as its sense. The perfect simplicity and pure nature of its imagery, the variety and richness of its diction, and the arrangement and structure of the verse, corresponding so fully to the general character of each piece,—now moving with pensive gravity, now chiming to the brisk flow of gayer thoughts, like music, that harmonizes by its measure to the feelings that its tones have awakened,—these are beauties which must escape the observation of the early scholar. But every step in the language brings him nearer to their spirit. Beauties insensibly arise

* A very good account of Arqua, where the house of Petrarch, the chair in which he died, and several other relics are preserved, may be found in the notes to the fourth Canto of Childe Harold.

where he had thought all was vain expression, truth of feeling breaks forth from passages that at first seemed stiff and artificial, until, losing sight of the book and the writer in the thrilling responses of his own heart, he is borne irresistibly onward by the flow of the thoughts and of the verse that embodies them.

We have already observed, that the value which Petrarch and his contemporaries attached to the Canzoniere, was far from that enthusiastic admiration with which it has been commented on and studied by posterity. And this arose, not so much from their insensibility to its beauties, as from their exclusive admiration of the manner of the old classics. His odes and sonnets were regarded as the light, although elegant relaxations, in which a scholar might unbend his mind without derogating too far from the dignity of his profession; while his claims to the admiration of posterity were supposed to rest almost exclusively upon his Latin works.* But this very circumstance may have contributed to the real excellence of the former. For although the one was labored with greater care and formed after the pure models of antiquity, the others have caught more truly the real movements of his own heart, and breathe an unlabored and almost involuntary sweetness; as the harp, when touched by the passing breeze, will utter tones of unearthly minstrelsy, which the most perfect science can never draw forth.

The amatory portion of the Canzoniere possesses two dis-

* But Petrarch himself seems, at a later date, to have perceived and acknowledged the superiority of his Italian poems over all his other works. "Paulus Vergerius scribit habuisse a Calutio Salviato, qui dicebat ab ipso Petrarcha audivisse, melius se omnia quæ scripserat facturum præter ejus in lingua vernacula scripta, ubi ingenue fatebatur seipsum in illis vicisse."—*Verger. apud Squarzaf.*

And in one of his own sonnets Petrarch says, that had he believed his poems would prove so acceptable, he would have increased their number and given more polish to the style. Sonn. 253, 2d part.

tinct characters. During the life-time of Laura, the poet's mind has a gayer or rather brighter range of imagery. The charms of her person float constantly before him. Her 'loved idea' is mixed with every object, from the soft hue of the evening sky, to the deep brown of the rustling forest; from the gale that fans his feverish brow, to the stream that lulls by its gentle murmurings. All the varying emotions of his soul are fully recorded.* We now find him flushed with joy at some simple mark of favor, now deeply dejected by some act of unusual harshness. At times he laments the fatal destiny that has condemned him to days of hopeless complaint, to nights of watchful agony. At others he seems to rejoice in his chains, and although fully sensible of the hopelessness of his passion, to cherish with anxious solicitude the flame that feeds it. And throughout the course of these feelings, the flow of the verse chimes sweetly to the thoughts they record; moving like music at night amid the stillness of some lonely lake, now floating softly over the unrippled water, now lost amid the rush of the rising breeze, now broken by the voice of the awakened echoes.

Laura dies; and here the tone of his sorrow is changed. She is no longer an earthly beauty, whom he can hope to bend by his tears, but a spirit of heaven, who has wiped away the dross of earthly passion, but still cherishes that pure affection by which man is sometimes drawn back to the image of his Maker. She then visits him in dreams, and amid the still watches of the night, rebukes his vain and

* "Itaque per os meum flamma cordis erumpens, miserabili sed (ut quidam dixerunt) dulci murmure valles, cœlumque complebat. Hinc illa vulgaria juvenilium laborum meorum cantica, quorum hodie pudet ac poenitet, sed eodem morbo affectis (ut videmus) acceptissima."—Fam. Lib. VIII. ep. 3.

"E certo ogni mio studio in quel temp'era
Pur di sfogare il doloroso core
In qualche modo."—*Sonnet*, 253.

sinful sorrow. She bids him weep for himself and not for her; she shows him, by bright glimpses of heaven, the inexpressible bliss of the state to which she has passed, and bids him look with anxious anticipation for the day in which he may be permitted to follow. There is something exceedingly touching in this communion with the dead whom we have loved, in this affection which even from heaven can look back upon the sad footsteps of the dear ones left behind, and cheer by friendly words and soothing visions the grief which none but itself can feel to be vain.

The style also of the second part seems to have changed in accordance with the feelings of the mourner. The movement of the verse is solemn and slow; a softer and purer strain of lament swells up from the heart; we are led to the solitary grave; we seek in vain for the form that was once so lovely, but which is now mingled and lost amid the common dust at our feet; at times a voice from heaven breaks in upon the stillness of night; a heavenward aspiration arises from the lone and stricken soul; while the imagery, shaded with the same deep coloring, softens and deepens and harmonizes the whole.

But these expressions of feeling, although beautiful from their illustrations and truth to nature, never approach the penetrating analysis of the mind, which may be found in the writings of some English poets. They are brought before us in a few rapid sketches, not drawn in the fulness of their fearful reality; entwined around some lovely object in nature, not chilling the heart by their lonely despair; we see the heaving, the agitation of the waves on the surface, but cannot discover the mighty arm that stirs them up from the foundation. Hence we rise from the Canzoniere, with a soft tinge of tender melancholy, but never oppressed by the weight of sorrow; with a tear glistening in the eye, or stealing in silence down the cheek, but never with the heart wrought up to that fearful excitement, which follows the reading of the

Robbers, the Corsair, or Werter. In the most touching complaints of Petrarch we find, if not a gleam of hope, at least, the melancholy smile of resignation; the utterance of his feelings seems in a measure to relieve him from their pressure; and even when he calls upon death as his only friend, we feel, that although grief may hasten his approach, the sufferer will never anticipate the blow.

It will be evident, even from this imperfect sketch, that the chief merit of the Canzoniere must lie in the choice of imagery and expression, and in the adaptation of its verse to a natural flow of tender thought. Elegance of expression, which is so important a part of all poetry, is peculiarly essential to lyric verse. The short compass of an ode or sonnet will not admit of the compression of many ideas, much less of their full development. It is only by seizing some pleasing thought, and adapting to it the embellishment of appropriate imagery, that the poet can fix our attention. However beautiful the leading idea, it is far from being the principal object in the piece. It is in its connexion with some beautiful object in natural scenery, with some lovely form of the poet's fancy, in its power to touch some hidden chord of our own sympathies, that the force and interest of the sonnet consist. Hence it must be the expression of our passing feelings, flowing almost spontaneously from their own deep sources, taking its tone from the impulses within, seldom exciting deep emotions, but sometimes mastering the heart, by a few bold images and vigorous expressions.*

* It should be remembered that the merit of Petrarch does not consist simply in the proper use of a vocabulary, already formed and fixed by polished usage, but in the selection of appropriate expressions, from the variety of an unsettled language. One proof of his superior taste in this respect is his rejecting the custom of mingling foreign words with those which are purely Italian, a custom universal among his contemporaries and predecessors in the literary world. V. Crescembeni della Volg. Poes. Vol. I. p. 363.

The illustration of these remarks may be found upon every page of the Canzoniere. As far as propriety of expression depends upon the choice and arrangement of words, Petrarch is a remarkable instance of pure taste. Receiving the language almost immediately from the rough but vigorous pen of Dante, he contributed greatly toward giving it that sweetness and harmony, which have so long been considered its leading characteristics. And there is no fact more remarkable in the whole compass of literary history, than that scarcely two obsolete words can be found in his Italian poems; so truly did he judge the genius of his native tongue, and so exquisite was the taste with which he selected, arranged, and polished its copious vocabulary.

In judging of epithets and expressions, however, we should always bear in mind that this, of all the beauties of speech, is the most exposed to the influence of time. A phrase may be vigorous or beautiful in one age or one country, from the peculiar circumstances in which it arose; while at a short interval either of time or space its beauty is unintelligible, or its power has been lost. True excellence will always bear the acuteness of critical examination, but many of the beauties of expression are strictly conventional, and thus are soon worn by familiar usage. Hence we pass over many delicate images which the quick imagination of the poet has connected with particular words, and read with comparative coldness many elegant phrases which usage has made familiar to our minds, although they first shone with the freshness of youthful beauty in the verse before us.

The Italian scholar will find a beautiful specimen of propriety of language, combined with strength and richness of diction, in the ode supposed to have been addressed to Cola di Rienzi.

Spirto gentil che quelle membra reggi.

The same qualities will be found, although in a less

degree, in the following sonnet. The movement of the verse is remarkably full and grave, corresponding with the loneliness of the heart it so beautifully describes.

Solo e pensoso i più deserti campi
Vo misurando a passi tardi e lenti;
E gli occhi porto per fuggire intenti
Dove vestigio uman l'arena stampi.
Altro schermo non trovo che mi scampi
Dal manifesto accorger delle genti,
Perchè negli atti d'allegrezza spenti,
Di fuor si legge com' io dentro avvampi.
Si ch'io mi credo omai, che monti e piagge
E fiumi e selve sappian di che tempre
Sia la mia vita ch' è celata altrui.
Ma pur si aspre vie, ne si selvagge,
Cercar non so, ch'amor non venga sempre
Ragionando con meco ed io con lui.

'Alone and pensive, the deserted strand
I wander o'er with slow and measured pace,
And shun with eager eye the lightest trace
Of human foot, imprinted on the sand.
I find, alas! no other resting-place
From the keen eye of man; for in the show
Of joys gone by, it reads upon my face
The traces of the flame that burns below.
And thus, at length, each leafy mount and plain,
Each wandering stream and shady forest know,
What others know not, all my life of pain.
And e'en as through the wildest tracts I go,
Love whispers in my ear his tender strain,
Which I with trembling lip repeat to him again.'

The same idea is finely enlarged upon in one of the sweetest odes of the Canzoniere. And it may here be observed, that the longest of Petrarch's pieces are generally the best. His feelings seem to gather strength as he warms with his subject, and ideas which at first rise coldly and singly in his mind, flow onward, warming at every step, gathering new strength

from every object, drawing in imagery from every source, until the mind and heart of the writer himself seem to roll on with the full current of collected thought.

The following verses, with which the ode commences, will show with what richness of expression and imagery he gives the charms of variety to ideas that his own verses have rendered familiar.

Di pensier in pensier, di monte in monte,
Mi guida amor, ch'ogni segnato calle
Provo contrario alla tranquilla vita.
Se'n solitaria piaggia rivo o fonte,
Se'n fra duo poggi siede ombrosa valle;
Ivi s'acquieta l'alma sbigottita:
E come amor l'invita,
Or ride, or piange, or teme, or s'assecura:
E'l volto, che lei segue ov'ella il mena,
Si turba e rasserena,
E in un esser picciol tempo dura:

'From thought to thought, from mount to mount,
Love leads me on; each beaten way
From life's calm tenor leads astray.
But if I find a lonely stream or fount,
Or 'twixt two gentle slopes a shady vale,
My troubled spirit finds relief,
And there, obedient to its chief,
Now weeps, now smiles, or hopes or trembles now.
While o'er my face, which still her will obeys,
Or joy, or sorrow plays,
Fast changing with the thoughts that move below.'

The following verses exhibit a beautiful contrast between the bright aspect of nature and the solitude of the heart; hues that glow, charms that pass brightly before the physical eye, but which cannot penetrate the frozen sources of feeling within.

Zefiro torna e'l bel tempo rimena,
E i fiori, e l'erbe sua dolce famiglia;
E garrir Progne, e pianger Filomena;
E primavera candida e vermiglia.

Ridono i prati, e'l ciel si rasserena ;
Giove si rallegra di mirar sua figlia ;
L'aria, e l'acqua, e la terra è d'amor piena :
Ogni animal d'amar si riconsiglia.
Ma per me, lasso, tornano i più gravi
Sospiri, che dal cor profondo tragge
Quella ch'al ciel sene portò le chiavi.
E cantar augullette, e fiorir piagge,
E'n belle donne oneste atti soavi
Sono un deserto e fere aspre selvagge.

'The soft west wind returning, brings again
Its lovely family of herbs and flowers ;
Progne's gay notes and Philomela's strain
Vary the dance of springtide's rosy hours.
And joyously o'er every field and plain
Glows the bright smile that greets them from above,
And the warm spirit of reviving love
Breathes in the air and murmurs from the main.
But tears and sorrowing sighs, which gushingly
Pour from the secret chambers of my heart,
Are all that spring returning brings to me ;
And in the modest smile, or glance of art,
The song of birds, the bloom of heath and tree,
A desert's rugged tract and savage forms I see.'

There is no species of poetical embellishment that requires so pure a taste, such accurate judgment, as the introduction of the stream and the forest and the bird that warbles in its shade to a share of our own feelings. When the heart is cold and the fancy unexcited, such images seem lifeless and extravagant. We catch not the tone of feeling which gives life to whatever meets the eye. It is like the soft strain of a pensive air in an hour of revelry, or the thrilling notes of the clarion when exhausted nature is fainting for repose. Yet every one, who has associated a strong passion with some favorite scene, will feel that this is the natural language of the heart. The thought of a dear object will be dearer amid the scenes that she has loved, and the wind that has 'breathed through her lattice' will come softer and sweeter

to the brow. How naturally does imagination, when warmed by the view of some venerable ruin, spread over its barren walls the rich drapery of other days, and summon up the forms and awaken the voices with which it was once enlivened. It is but a step further to call upon the mossy stone for the tale of its youth, or to believe that the air around you is still warmed by the breath of those whose memory makes it dear.

But even this is extravagant, if we view it only through the cold medium of judgment. The air cannot breathe, the stone cannot speak, and the ivy drapery of the walls cannot be exchanged for their original embellishments. But for such an eye there is no form of beauty in the evening sky, no soothing voice in the whispered hymns of the forest. It is useless to scan the poetry of passion with the cold eye of unimpassioned reason. Our moments of truest poetic feeling are those of deepest excitement; not always of an excitement that arouses the energies of the mind, and acts upon its deepest sensibilities, but of one which sometimes speaks in low tones to the softer senses of our nature, and stirs with a gentle touch the deep sources of passion.

Now we are too apt to forget, that the poetry of feeling is the language of this excitement,—a language that flows naturally and freely from the depths of the soul, although a chill often spreads over it from the unmoved sympathies of the reader. What the true poet writes with feeling he has often felt in agony, and although, when he calls upon the grove and the stream to witness his emotions, it may seem to us the language of embellishment, it is for him the warm expression of real emotions.

We find repeated examples of this imagery in the verses of Petrarch, varying, however, according to the nature of his own emotions; sometimes pursuing the rapid current with envious eye, at others seeking, with jealous haste, the solitude of the desert; now linked with some beautiful form of natural

scenery, now responding to the soft notes of the melancholy nightingale; while every image that arises in the mind receives the coloring of that mind, its warmth, its purity, and its tenderness.

While passing near the sources of the Rhone on his way to Avignon, the sight of a stream, whose waters would flow from his eye to murmur around the footsteps of Laura, called forth the following sonnet,—light and easy in its movement, although not characterized by any depth either of thought or of feeling.

Rapido fiume; che d' alpestre vena
Rodendo intorno, onde'l tuo nome prendi,
Notte e dì meco desioso scendi
Ov' Amor me, te sol natura mena;
Vattene innanzi; il tuo corso non frena
Nè stancheszza, nè sonno; e pria che rendi
Suo dritto al mar, fiso ù si mostri, attendi
L'erba più verde, e l'aria più serena:
Ivi è quel nostro vivo e dolce sole,
Ch' adorna e'nfiora la tua riva manca;
Forse, (O che spero!) il mio tardar le dole,
Baciale 'l piede e la man bella e bianca.
Dille, il baciar sie'n vece di parole:
Lo spirto è pronto, ma la carne è stanca.

'Swift current, that from rocky Alpine vein,
Gathering the tribute to thy waters free,
Mov'st joyous onward night and day with me,
Where nature leads thee, me love's tyrant chain;
Roll freely on; nor toil, nor rest restrain
Thine arrowy course; but ere thou yieldest in
The tribute of thy waters to the main,
Seek out heaven's purest sky, earth's deepest green;
There wilt thou find the bright and living beam,
That o'er thy left bank sheds its heavenly rays;
If unto her too slow my footsteps seem,
(While by her feet thy lingering current strays,
Forming to words the murmurs of its stream)
Say that the weary flesh the willing soul delays.'

The following verses have a far sweeter flow, with a deep tone of tender melancholy. They were written after the death of Laura.

Quel rosigniuol, che sì soave piagne
Forse suoi figli, o sua cara consorte,
Di dolcezza empie il cielo e le campagne
Di tante note sì pietose e scorte;
E tutta notte par, che m'accompagne
E mi rammente la mia dura sorte.

'Yon nightingale, whose melancholy strain
Laments his tender young, or partner dear,
Pours sweetly through the mellow air and plain,
His thousand notes, so mournful and so clear:
And through night's lonely watches flowing near,
They wake the buried memory of my pain.'

The following piece is purely devotional.

I vo piangendo i miei passati tempi,
I quai posi in amar cosa mortale
Senza levarmi a volo, avend'io l'ale,
Per dar forse di me non bassi esempi,
Tu, che vedi i miei mali indegni ed empi,
Re del cielo invisibile, immortale;
Soccori all' alma disviata e frale,
E'l suo difetto di tua grazia adempi.
Sicchè s'io vissi in guerra ed in tempesta,
Mora in pace ed in porto; e se la stanza
Fu vana, almen sia la partita onesta.
A quel poco di viver, che m' avanza,
Ed al morir degni esser tua man presta;
Tu sai ben, che'n altrui non ho speranza.

'In tears I trace the memory of the days,
When every thought was bent on human love,
Nor dared direct its eager flight above,
And seek (as heaven designed) a nobler praise.
O, whilst thine eye my wretched state surveys,
Invisible, immortal king of heaven!
Unto my weak and erring soul be given
To gather strength in thy reviving rays.

So that a life, mid war and tempest past,
A peaceful port may find; and close at last,
On Jesus's breast, its years of vanity.
And when at length thy summons sets me free,
O may thy powerful arms around me cast,
Support the fainting soul, that knows no trust but thee.'

Mingled with the amatory verses of the Canzoniere, there are a few noble odes, which breathe a purer feeling, and flow in a more elevated strain than individual love can ever inspire. These are the tributes to the sad state of his beloved Italy; verses, in which the love of country speaks boldly and fearlessly, while the pride of ancient power weeps bitterly over the bleeding remains of the Empire. There is a boldness in the tone with which he addresses the rulers of his country, a confidence in the purity and elevation of his views, which give to every word the weight of an oracle. We listen to him, as to the sighs of a favorite child beside the tomb that is closing over the lifeless remains of his parent. Whatever affectation of feeling he may have been guilty of in other pieces, there is surely none here. Every word comes warm from the soul. Every thought seems to rise up from the swelling heart. The imagery itself seems to be the resource of an excess of feeling, which plain language is too feeble to express. And the truth of observation, the sincerity of conviction with which he describes the wrong, and points out the remedy, correspond to the general warmth of his expostulations. The noble ode, which he composed upon the approach of the emperor, should be engraven upon the mind of every Italian. It opens with an address to Italy, and an invocation to the Saviour.

'Mine own Italia, although words be vain,
The deadly wounds to heal,
Which scattered o'er thy lovely form I see,
Yet some relief my bleeding heart may feel,
In forming such a strain
As all thy trembling sons expect from me.

Great judge of heaven, I turn to thee:
O may the love, that led thee once to earth,
Turn to thine own beloved land, thine eyes;
See where she lowly lies,
See from what trivial cause, what cruel wars have birth.'

Then directing his voice to the divided rulers of Italy, he describes in a few energetic words, which we know not how to translate, the miserable condition to which their own divisions and the intervention of foreign power had reduced them. He points to the Alps, the barriers which nature had raised for their protection, but which their own short-sighted ambition had broken down; and with a deep burst of indignation turns back to their former trophies of victory won from their present rulers. There is nothing more beautiful in the whole range of lyric poetry, than the melancholy flow of the verse, in which, speaking of the "collected flood of deserts strange," he asks, what hope can smile for those who are thus sinking under the blows of their brethren. Suddenly turning from the contemplation of these miserable divisions, and of the clouds that cast their dark shadows over the future, he breaks forth in a most touching appeal to the home of his birth, the last shroud of his parents, by which, at least, although every other inducement should fail, the spirit of ancient Rome should again be aroused to cast off the fatal load that bows it to the earth. The last stanza, flowing in a less animated, but nobly dignified strain, is an exhortation to the Emperor to hush the busy spirit of hatred and envy, and devote to the nobler end of securing the peace and union of Italy, that time which is too often passed in the selfish gratification of individual passion.

In so large a collection of poems, chiefly devoted to the expression of one absorbing feeling, it would be unnatural to suppose that all parts should be uniformly perfect. Our feelings are not all equally fitted for expression, and the language that should clothe them not always at our command.

The poet must sometimes feel deeply where he can find no adequate expression for his feelings, and the mind glow with thoughts that grow cold in the utterance. Accordingly, we find many cold verses and frigid conceits mingled with true bursts of feeling, and even some entire pieces remarkable only for skill of versification. Happily, however, they bear a very small proportion to the true expressions of nature. No clearer proof of this can be required, than what is furnished by the influence which the Canzoniere has always exerted upon Italian poetry. Few literary histories record a greater variety of striking revolutions than the literary history of Italy. Commencing at the birth of the language, with the wild and vigorous poem of Dante, the roughness of versification and occasional irregularity of diction were polished and corrected by the purer taste of Petrarch. Here, as the natural consequence of causes, whose origin we shall soon have occasion to observe, the taste of men of letters again turned back to the Latin classics. During the long interval of nearly a century, that elapsed between the death of Petrarch and the manhood of Lorenzo de' Medici, the progress of Italian poetry had ceased, and the cultivation of native literature given place to the schools of philosophy, and an unsuccessful imitation of Latin verse. With Lorenzo the taste for Italian poetry again revived, and together with it, were revived the honors of Petrarch. The Canzoniere began once more to pass from mouth to mouth, and to dispute the palm with Horace and Catullus. After a long and glowing period of noble productions, ushered in by the classic taste of Poliziano, enlivened by the irregularly beautiful descriptions of Ariosto, and stamped at last by the solemn impress of the Jerusalem, the pure spirit of poetry yielded before another foe, the fanciful conceits and studied antithesis of the Seicentisti. And here Petrarch again disappears from the stage; but at the first dawn of reviving taste, the poets of Italy return once more to the father of lyric verse, to seek in his

pages purity of style, chaste elegance of imagery, with all the simpler graces of natural thought. And never have they returned to this model, without a correspondent change in the character of their productions. Nature and feeling again resume their place at the side of the Canzoniere; the heart is again thrilled with the language of true patriotism, and the eye again wet with the tear of true feeling.*

The Trionfi of Petrarch are not generally so much admired as the sonnets and odes. They are a sort of poetical vision, in which the praises of Laura are blended with the triumphs of Love, of Chastity, of Death, of Fame, of Time, and of the Divinity; a species of composition which is supposed to have originated among the Provençal poets. They are written in terza rima, often less polished than the verses of the Canzoniere, but sometimes approaching the vigorous diction of Dante.† The long catalogue of names collected from ancient history and mythology is highly characteristic of the period in which the work was written, but is wholly unsuited to the taste of our own. Yet some of these are accompanied by bold sketches of character,—verses in which a prominent trait is made to represent the whole person, while a few vigorous expressions form a perfect painting to the mental eye. The passages in which he describes the characteristics of love, the nature and play of his own feelings, or where his imagination is warmed by some scenic description, which, as he writes, grows clearer and brighter to the eye of fancy, are among the best, if not decidedly the best, of his poems. Nothing, indeed, can be more beautiful than the last half of the third Capitolo of the Triumph of Love, and the whole of the

* V. Crescembeni De' Comment. int. alla Stor. della Volg. Poes. Vol. I. pp. 118, 119, 120.

Denina Vic. della Lett. Parte III. pass.

† The occasional roughness of the Canzoniere is not to be attributed to the taste of Petrarch; but to his death, that left them incomplete. Squarzaf. Vit. Pet. 7.

Triumph of Death. But the chief qualities of these poems (except that they possess greater vigor of conception and force of expression), are the same as those of the Canzoniere; the same tenderness of feeling, the same quick perception of the delicate sympathies between the external world and the world within, the same richness of expression and brilliant fancy.

We have thus far followed the course of Petrarch, through the productions which he seems to have composed in obedience to the promptings of his own genius; we must now (although with a hurried pen) trace his footsteps along the path to which his judgment and his reason directed him.

It should not be forgotten that the spirit of his age was directed to the study of philosophy and the Latin classics, rather than to the cultivation of a native literature. Nor is it unworthy of remark, that the first who gave this impulse to modern taste, were among those whom we now venerate as the fathers of modern literature; not indeed for a successful imitation of the classics whom they admired so highly, but for productions formed in the style of their own age, and breathing its wild, irregular spirit.

A passion for Latin literature was closely connected with Petrarch's first attachment to letters. While his companions at Carpentras were following the beaten track of minor Latin writers, he had already overcome the chief difficulties of the language, and was learning to enjoy the beauties of Cicero and of Livy. The study of law, far from supplanting this taste, did not even retard its development. While his instructors supposed him engaged in the codes, he was secretly bending over the more congenial pages of Cicero; and even the allusions to old manners and monuments, which he met in his legal studies, served as new excitements to the cultivation of his natural taste.

A taste so strong and decided, combined with the most aspiring ambition, found unusual incitements to exertion in

the peculiar state of Latin literature. Although a certain degree of veneration was attached to some of the classic writers, a strange mass of misconception was mingled with the opinion of even the literary men of the age. Petrarch carried on a correspondence, in the name of the Bishop of Lombes, with a celebrated professor of law, who, not content with his legal reputation, aspired also to the name of scholar. In this he ridicules the anachronisms and gross errors of every description, into which his correspondent was constantly falling. Even the wise King Robert was not wholly free from the erroneous views of the age, and he was long suspicious of the character, and neglectful of the works of Virgil. When scholars and their patrons are led into such errors as these, it is clear that the means of correcting them are very rare. And in fact, the works of most classic writers, contained in scarce manuscripts, and often scattered through different countries, were in themselves an object of eager research. A tract of Cicero might be found entire in a library of Italy, a few orations in some city of Flanders, a portion of Quinctilian or Livy in some convent of France or Spain: but to unite and compare and correct these scattered fragments, and give to them the form and convenience of a regular collection, was a task that required not money and leisure alone, but indefatigable industry, and an indomitable zeal for the pursuit of letters.

Petrarch engaged in this research with all the energies of his soul. He spared no expense in securing the assistance of others, for money was of no value to him when it could be exchanged for books. He employed professed copyists; he sent into different countries for particular works, not always, indeed, with the hope of finding them, but generally with the expectation of preserving some important manuscript. No friend was ever permitted to leave him for a tour, or for business, or even to return to his own country, without a charge to remember the wants of his collection, and particularly to

search for the writings of Cicero. By his influence, many were induced to engage in the same pursuit; and whether coöperating with his views, or consulting more directly their private interest, they all contributed to the preservation and multiplying of classic authors. Nor was it by words and exhortations alone, that Petrarch animated his friends to this pursuit. His own activity in collecting and copying, was a bright example to his most zealous followers. During his various journeys, he kept constantly in view the discovery of his favorite manuscripts. During a journey to Rome, he discovered a part of the works of Quinctilian, and in a letter from Flanders he complains that he could hardly find in the rich city of Liege, a little yellow ink to copy a few orations of Cicero. A manuscript of Virgil, of his copying, is still preserved in the Ambrosian library of Milan; and in the Laurentian of Florence may be seen two beautiful copies of Cicero's Epistles, one of the Familiar Correspondence, the other of the Letters to Atticus,—both written by the same indefatigable hand.

But the task of copying formed a very small part of his labors. The ignorance and presumption of former copyists had introduced gross corruptions into the texts of many authors, and disfigured them so much, that, according to Petrarch, the writers themselves would have been at a loss to distinguish them. The labors of the editor have been so long familiar to modern readers, that they no longer come before us surrounded with bewildering perplexities; but for Petrarch, the path was new and encumbered with every species of obstruction. There were no fixed principles, no established canons; in short, no standard that he could follow, but the dictates of his own taste and judgment. The dignity of the laborer increasing in proportion to the difficulty and importance of his task, most writers have looked upon this as one of the proudest monuments of Petrarch's glory. The fourth letter of the second book *De Senectute* contains a

fine specimen of his critical skill,—not, indeed, such acuteness and strength of argument as would command the attention of a modern scholar, but a degree of thought and observation, almost wholly unknown to his credulous contemporaries.

A passion for history was the natural companion of such researches. And the fondness with which Petrarch pursued this study, would be evident from his letters alone, had we not the clearer testimony of his own compositions. In this study, also, he was distinguished by the judgment with which he weighed the conflicting testimony of ancient writers, forming his opinion according to the authority of the historian, and the probability of his narrative. Nor was he content with the testimony of books alone; the ancient monuments, which have proved so useful to modern historians, were at an early period studied by him as sources of historical evidence, and the first collection of medals, of which we find mention in literary history, was that which he presented to the Emperor Charles II.*

We dwell with pleasure upon this portion of Petrarch's history, for it is the clearest record of his bold and energetic mind, qualities willingly conceded to him, it is true, by all who have studied the literary history of his age; but which hundreds who can repeat the story of Laura, would never think of attributing to the mind of her lover.

We possess a curious proof of the poetical enthusiasm which Petrarch carried into the driest part of his researches, in the letters which he addressed to Cicero, and Homer, and others of the old classics. The feeling itself, the desire to hold some direct communication, some interchange of thought, with those from whom we learn to think and to express our thoughts, has undoubtedly been shared by every enthusiastic scholar. But there are few, we believe, who have thus overleaped in imagination the bounds of time, and attempted to

* Tirab. V. 104.

form, in the silence of their own studies, a communion with the dead. The number of these letters is small; the edition before us contains only five, two to Cicero, one to Seneca, one to Livy, and one to Varro; but there are others in manuscript in the European libraries, and some have been already published by the Abbé de Sade.

We are not aware that any proof of Petrarch's progress in Greek literature, is to be found in the influence of this study upon his own writings. But we find the clearest evidence of the ardor with which he engaged in it, in various parts of his works,* and especially in some letters in which he laments the loss of his instructor Barlaamo, by which he was left upon the very threshold of the study.†

It would, however, be unjust to confine within these narrow bounds of research, the course and the fruits of Petrarch's classical studies. The pure and harmonious diction of his Italian poems, of which the language of his age contained no model, must be in part attributed to his constant study of the most correct and harmonious of the Latin poets. While an extensive correspondence bears witness to the social qualities of his heart, a long series of laborious Latin compositions amply testifies to his unwearied diligence. But authors are generally judged by those productions which possess a permanent interest, without regard to the views or opinions of their contemporaries. And thus many works of Petrarch, which display in the clearest light his profound research, his union of the study of man with the study of books, and the rich moral qualities which adorned his heart, are wholly lost to the greater part of modern readers. But our limits will not permit us to examine, at present, the character and merits of these various productions.

* Opere, p. 346. † Var. Epist. 20.

MILTON.*

" AGES elapsed ere Homer's lamp appear'd,
And ages ere the Mantuan swan was heard:
To carry Nature lengths unknown before,
To give a Milton birth, asked ages more.
Thus Genius rose and set at ordered times,
And shot a day-spring into distant climes,
Ennobling every region that he chose;
He sunk in Greece, in Italy he rose;
And tedious years of gothic darkness pass'd,
Emerged all splendor in our isle at last.
Thus lovely halcyons dive into the main,
Then show far off their shining plumes again."

COWPER.

THE discovery of the lost work of Milton, the treatise "Of the Christian Doctrine," in 1823, drew a sudden attention to his name. For a short time the literary journals were filled with disquisitions on his genius; new editions of his works, and new compilations of his life, were published. But the new-found book having, in itself, less attraction than any other work of Milton, the curiosity of the public as quickly subsided, and left the poet to the enjoyment of his permanent fame, or to such increase or abatement of it only as is incidental to a sublime genius, quite independent of the momentary challenge of universal attention to his claims.

* *The Poetical Works of* JOHN MILTON. A new Edition. 2 vols. 8vo. Boston: Hilliard, Gray, and Co. 1836.

But, if the new and temporary renown of the poet is silent again, it is nevertheless true that he has gained, in this age, some increase of permanent praise. The fame of a great man is not rigid and stony like his bust. It changes with time. It needs time to give it due perspective. It was very easy to remark an altered tone in the criticism when Milton re-appeared as an author, fifteen years ago, from any that had been bestowed on the same subject before. It implied merit indisputable and illustrious; yet so near to the modern mind as to be still alive and life-giving. The aspect of Milton, to this generation, will be part of the history of the nineteenth century. There is no name in literature between his age and ours, that rises into any approach to his own. And as a man's fame, of course, characterizes those who give it, as much as him who receives it, the new criticism indicated a change in the public taste, and a change which the poet himself might claim to have wrought.

The reputation of Milton had already undergone one or two revolutions long anterior to its recent aspects. In his lifetime, he was little, or not at all, known as a poet, but obtained great respect from his contemporaries as an accomplished scholar, and a formidable controvertist. His poem fell unregarded among his countrymen. His prose writings, especially the "Defence of the English People," seem to have been read with avidity. These tracts are remarkable compositions. They are earnest, spiritual, rich with allusion, sparkling with innumerable ornaments; but, as writings designed to gain a practical point, they fail. They are not effective, like similar productions of Swift and Burke; or, like what became also controversial tracts, several masterly speeches in the history of the American Congress. Milton seldom deigns a glance at the obstacles that are to be overcome before that which he proposes can be done. There is no attempt to conciliate,—no mediate, no preparatory course suggested,—but, peremptory and impassioned, he demands,

on the instant, an ideal justice. Therein they are discriminated from modern writings, in which a regard to the actual is all but universal.

Their rhetorical excellence must also suffer some deduction. They have no perfectness. These writings are wonderful for the truth, the learning, the subtilty and pomp of the language; but the whole is sacrificed to the particular. Eager to do fit justice to each thought, he does not subordinate it so as to project the main argument. He writes whilst he is heated; the piece shows all the rambles and resources of indignation; but he has never *integrated* the parts of the argument in his mind. The reader is fatigued with admiration, but is not yet master of the subject.

Two of his pieces may be excepted from this description, one for its faults, the other for its excellence. The "Defence of the People of England," on which his contemporary fame was founded, is, when divested of its pure Latinity, the worst of his works. Only its general aim, and a few elevated passages, can save it. We could be well content, if the flames to which it was condemned at Paris, at Toulouse, and at London, had utterly consumed it. The lover of his genius will always regret that he should not have taken counsel of his own lofty heart at this, as at other times, and have written from the deep convictions of love and right, which are the foundations of civil liberty. There is little poetry or prophecy in this mean and ribald scolding. To insult Salmasius, not to acquit England, is the main design. What under heaven had Madame de Saumaise, or the manner of living of Saumaise, or Salmasius, or his blunders of grammar, or his niceties of diction, to do with the solemn question, whether Charles Stuart had been rightfully slain? Though it evinces learning and critical skill, yet, as an historical argument, it cannot be valued with similar disquisitions of Robertson and Hallam, and even less celebrated scholars. But, when he comes to speak of the reason of the thing, then

he always recovers himself. The voice of the mob is silent, and Milton speaks. And the peroration, in which he implores his countrymen to refute this adversary by their great deeds, is in a just spirit. The other piece is his "Areopagitica," the discourse, addressed to the Parliament, in favor of removing the censorship of the press; the most splendid of his prose works. It is, as Luther said of one of Melancthon's writings, "alive, hath hands and feet,—and not like Erasmus's sentences, which were made, not grown." The weight of the thought is equalled by the vivacity of the expression, and it cheers as well as teaches. This tract is far the best known, and the most read of all, and is still a magazine of reasons for the freedom of the press. It is valuable in history as an argument addressed to a government to produce a practical end, and plainly presupposes a very peculiar state of society.

But deeply as that peculiar state of society, in which and for which Milton wrote, has engraved itself in the remembrance of the world, it shares the destiny which overtakes everything local and personal in nature; and the accidental facts, on which a battle of principles was fought, have already passed, or are fast passing, into oblivion. We have lost all interest in Milton as the redoubted disputant of a sect; but by his own innate worth this man has steadily risen in the world's reverence, and occupies a more imposing place in the mind of men at this hour than ever before.

It is the aspect which he presents to this generation, that alone concerns us. Milton, the controvertist, has lost his popularity long ago; and if we skip the pages of "Paradise Lost," where "God the Father argues like a school divine," so did the next age to his own. But we are persuaded, he kindles a love and emulation in us, which he did not in foregoing generations. We think we have seen and heard criticism upon the poems, which the bard himself would have more valued than the recorded praise of Dryden, Addison,

and Johnson, because it came nearer to the mark; was finer and closer appreciation; the praise of intimate knowledge and delight; and, of course, more welcome to the poet than the general and vague acknowledgment of his genius by those able, but unsympathizing critics. We think we have heard the recitation of his verses by genius, which found in them that which itself would say; recitation which told, in the diamond sharpness of every articulation, that now first was such perception and enjoyment possible; the perception and enjoyment of all his varied rhythm, and his perfect fusion of the classic and the English styles. This is a poet's right; for every masterpiece of art goes on for some ages reconciling the world unto itself, and despotically fashioning the public ear. The opposition to it, always greatest at first, continually decreases, and at last ends; and a new race grows up in the taste and spirit of the work, with the utmost advantage for seeing intimately its power and beauty.

But it would be great injustice to Milton to consider him as enjoying merely a critical reputation. It is the prerogative of this great man to stand at this hour foremost of all men in literary history, and so (shall we not say?) of all men, in the power *to inspire*. Virtue goes out of him into others. Leaving out of view the pretensions of our contemporaries (always an incalculable influence), we think no man can be named, whose mind still acts on the cultivated intellect of England and America with an energy comparable to that of Milton. As a poet, Shakspeare undoubtedly transcends, and far surpasses him in his popularity with foreign nations; but Shakspeare is a voice merely; who and what he was that sang, that sings, we know not. Milton stands erect, commanding, still visible as a man among men, and reads the laws of the moral sentiment to the newborn race. There is something pleasing in the affection with which we can regard a man who died a hundred and sixty years ago in the other hemisphere, who, in respect to personal relations, is to us as

the wind, yet by an influence purely spiritual makes us jealous for his fame as for that of a near friend. He is identified in the mind with all select and holy images, with the supreme interests of the human race. If hereby we attain any more precision, we proceed to say, that we think no man in these later ages, and few men ever, possessed so great a conception of the manly character. Better than any other he has discharged the office of every great man, namely, to raise the idea of Man in the minds of his contemporaries and of posterity,—to draw after nature a life of man, exhibiting such a composition of grace, of strength, and of virtue, as poet had not described nor hero lived. Human nature in these ages is indebted to him for its best portrait. Many philosophers in England, France, and Germany, have formally dedicated their study to this problem; and we think it impossible to recall one in those countries, who communicates the same vibration of hope, of self-reverence, of piety, of delight in beauty, which the name of Milton awakens. Lord Bacon, who has written much and with prodigious ability on this science, shrinks and falters before the absolute and uncourtly Puritan. Bacon's Essays are the portrait of an ambitious and profound calculator, a great man of the vulgar sort. Of the upper world of man's being they speak few and faint words. The man of Locke is virtuous without enthusiasm, and intelligent without poetry. Addison, Pope, Hume, and Johnson, students, with very unlike temper and success, of the same subject, cannot, taken together, make any pretension to the amount or the quality of Milton's inspirations. The man of Lord Chesterfield is unworthy to touch his garment's hem. Franklin's man is a frugal, inoffensive, thrifty citizen, but savours of nothing heroic. The genius of France has not, even in her best days, yet culminated in any one head, not in Rousseau, not in Pascal, not in Fenelon,—into such perception of all the attributes of humanity, as to entitle it to any rivalry in these lists. In Germany, the greatest

writers are still too recent to institute a comparison; and yet we are tempted to say, that art and not life seems to be the end of their effort. But the idea of a purer existence than any he saw around him, to be realized in the life and conversation of men, inspired every act and every writing of John Milton. He defined the object of education to be "to fit a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." He declared, that "he who would aspire to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things, not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy." Nor is there in literature a more noble outline of a wise external education, than that which he drew up, at the age of thirty-six, in his Letter to Samuel Hartlib. The muscles, the nerves, and the flesh, with which this skeleton is to be filled up and covered, exist in his works and must be sought there.

For the delineation of this heroic image of man, Milton enjoyed singular advantages. Perfections of body and of mind are attributed to him by his biographers, that, if the anecdotes had come down from a greater distance of time, or had not been in part furnished or corroborated by political enemies, would lead us to suspect the portraits were ideal, like the Cyrus of Xenophon, the Telemachus of Fenelon, or the popular traditions of Alfred the Great.

Handsome to a proverb, he was called the lady of his college. Aubrey says, "This harmonical and ingenuous soul dwelt in a beautiful and well proportioned body." His manners and his carriage did him no injustice. Wood, his political opponent, relates, that "his deportment was affable, his gait erect and manly, bespeaking courage and undauntedness." Aubrey adds a sharp trait, that "he pronounced the letter R very hard, a certain sign of a satirical genius." He

had the senses of a Greek. His eye was quick. and he was accounted an excellent master of his rapier. His ear for music was so acute, that he was not only enthusiastic in his love, but a skilful performer himself; and his voice, we are told, was delicately sweet and harmonious. He insists that music shall make a part of a generous education.

With these keen perceptions, he naturally received a love of nature, and a rare susceptibility to impressions from external beauty. In the midst of London, he seems, like the creatures of the field and the forest, to have been tuned in concord with the order of the world; for, he believed, his poetic vein only flowed from the autumnal to the vernal equinox; and, in his essay on Education, he doubts whether, in the fine days of spring, any study can be accomplished by young men. "In those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against nature, not to go out and see her riches and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth." His sensibility to impressions from beauty needs no proof from his history; it shines through every page. The form and the voice of Leonora Baroni seem to have captivated him in Rome, and to her he addressed his Italian sonnets and Latin epigrams.

To these endowments it must be added, that his address and his conversation were worthy of his fame. His house was resorted to by men of wit, and foreigners came to England, we are told, "to see the Lord Protector and Mr. Milton." In a letter to one of his foreign correspondents, Emeric Bigot, and in reply apparently to some compliment on his powers of conversation, he writes: "Many have been celebrated for their compositions, whose common conversation and intercourse have betrayed no marks of sublimity or genius. But, as far as possible, I aim to show myself equal in thought and speech to what I have written, if I have written any thing well."

These endowments received the benefit of a careful and

happy discipline. His father's care, seconded by his own endeavour, introduced him to a profound skill in all the treasures of the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Italian tongues; and, to enlarge and enliven his elegant learning, he was sent into Italy, where he beheld the remains of ancient art, and the rival works of Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Correggio; where, also, he received social and academical honors from the learned and the great. In Paris, he became acquainted with Grotius; in Florence or Rome, with Galileo; and probably no traveller ever entered that country of history with better right to its hospitality, none upon whom its influences could have fallen more congenially.

Among the advantages of his foreign travel, Milton certainly did not count it the least, that it contributed to forge and polish that great weapon of which he acquired such extraordinary mastery,—his power of language. His lore of foreign tongues added daily to his consummate skill in the use of his own. No individual writer has been an equal benefactor of the English tongue by showing its capabilities. Very early in life he became conscious that he had more to say to his fellow-men than they had fit words to embody. At nineteen years, in a college exercise, he addresses his native language, saying to it, that it would be his choice to leave trifles for a grave argument,—

> "Such as may make thee search thy coffers round,
> Before thou clothe my fancy in fit sound;
> Such where the deep transported mind may soar
> Above the wheeling poles, and at Heaven's door
> Look in, and see each blissful deity,
> How he before the thunderous throne doth lie."

Michael Angelo calls "him alone an artist, whose hands can execute what his mind has conceived." The world, no doubt, contains very many of that class of men whom Wordsworth denominates "*silent poets*," whose minds teem with images which they want words to clothe. But Milton's

mind seems to have no thought or emotion which refused to be recorded. His mastery of his native tongue was more than to use it as well as any other; he cast it into new forms. He uttered in it things unheard before. Not imitating, but rivalling Shakspeare, he scattered, in tones of prolonged and delicate melody, his pastoral and romantic fancies; then soaring into unattempted strains, he made it capable of an unknown majesty, and bent it to express every trait of beauty, every shade of thought; and searched the kennel and jakes as well as the palaces of sound for the harsh discords of his polemic wrath. We may even apply to his performance on the instrument of language, his own description of music:

> "—notes, with many a winding bout
> Of linked sweetness long drawn out,
> With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
> The melting voice through mazes running,
> Untwisting all the chains that tie
> The hidden soul of harmony."

But, whilst Milton was conscious of possessing this intellectual voice, penetrating through ages, and propelling its melodious undulations forward through the coming world, he knew, also, that this mastery of language was a secondary power, and he respected the mysterious source whence it had its spring; namely, clear conceptions, and a devoted heart. "For me," he said, in his, "Apology for Smectymnuus," "although I cannot say that I am utterly untrained in those rules which best rhetoricians have given, or unacquainted with those examples which the prime authors of eloquence have written in any learned tongue, yet true eloquence I find to be none but the serious and hearty love of truth; and that whose mind soever is fully possessed with a fervent desire to know good things, and with the dearest charity to infuse the knowledge of them into others, when such a man would speak, his words, by what I can express, like so many nimble

and airy servitors, trip about him at command; and in well-ordered files, as he would wish, fall aptly into their own places."

But, as basis or fountain of his rare physical and intellectual accomplishments, the man Milton was just and devout. He is rightly dear to mankind, because in him,—among so many perverse and partial men of genius,—in him humanity rights itself; the old eternal goodness finds a home in his breast, and for once shows itself beautiful. His gifts are subordinated to his moral sentiments. And his virtues are so graceful, that they seem rather talents than labors. Among so many contrivances as the world has seen to make holiness ugly, in Milton, at least, it was so pure a flame, that the foremost impression his character makes is that of elegance. The victories of the conscience in him are gained by the commanding charm, which all the severe and restrictive virtues have for him. His virtues remind us of what Plutarch said of Timoleon's victories, that they resembled Homer's verses, they ran so easy and natural. His habits of living were austere. He was abstemious in diet, chaste, an early riser, and industrious. He tells us, in a Latin poem, that the lyrist may indulge in wine and in a freer life; but that he, who would write an epic to the nations, must eat beans and drink water. Yet in his severity is no grimace or effort. He serves from love, not from fear. He is innocent and exact, because his taste was so pure and delicate. He acknowledges to his friend Diodati, at the age of twenty-one, that he is enamoured, if ever any was, of moral perfection. "For, whatever the Deity may have bestowed upon me in other respects, he has certainly inspired me, if any ever were inspired, with a passion for the good and fair. Nor did Ceres, according to the fable, ever seek her daughter Proserpine with such unceasing solicitude, as I have sought this τοῦ καλοῦ ἰδέαν, this perfect model of the beautiful in all forms and appearances of things."

When he was charged with loose habits of living, he declares, that "a certain niceness of nature, an honest haughtiness and self-esteem either of what I was or what I might be, and a modesty, kept me still above those low descents of mind, beneath which he must deject and plunge himself, that can agree" to such degradation.

"His mind gave him," he said, "that every free and gentle spirit, without that oath of chastity, ought to be born a knight; nor needed to expect the gilt spur, or the laying of a sword upon his shoulder, to stir him up, by his counsel and his arm, to secure and protect" attempted innocence.

He states these things, he says, "to show, that, though Christianity had been but slightly taught him, yet a certain reservedness of natural disposition and moral discipline, learned out of the noblest philosophy, was enough to keep him in disdain of far less incontinences than these," that had been charged on him. In like spirit, he replies to the suspicious calumny respecting his morning haunts. "Those morning haunts are where they should be, at home; not sleeping, or concocting the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring, in winter, often ere the sound of any bell awake men to labor or devotion; in summer, as oft with the bird that first rouses, or not much tardier, to read good authors, or cause them to be read, till the attention be weary, or memory have its perfect fraught; then with useful and generous labors preserving the body's health and hardiness, to render lightsome, clear, and not lumpish obedience to the mind, to the cause of religion, and our country's liberty, when it shall require firm hearts in sound bodies to stand and cover their stations. These are the morning practices." This native honor never forsook him. It is the spirit of "Comus," the loftiest song in the praise of chastity, that is in any language. It always sparkles in his eyes. It breathed itself over his decent form. It refined his amusements, which

consisted in gardening, in exercise with the sword, and in playing on the organ. It engaged his interest in chivalry, in courtesy, in whatsoever savoured of generosity and nobleness. This magnanimity shines in all his life. He accepts a high impulse at every risk, and deliberately undertakes the defence of the English people, when advised by his physicians that he does it at the cost of sight. There is a forbearance even in his polemics. He opens the war and strikes the first blow. When he had cut down his opponents, he left the details of death and plunder to meaner partizans. He said, "he had learned the prudence of the Roman soldier, not to stand breaking of legs, when the breath was quite out of the body."

To this antique heroism, Milton added the genius of the Christian sanctity. Few men could be cited who have so well understood what is peculiar in the Christian ethics, and the precise aid it has brought to men, in being an emphatic affirmation of the omnipotence of spiritual laws; and, by way of marking the contrast to vulgar opinions, laying its chief stress on humility. The indifferency of a wise mind to what is called high and low, and the fact that true greatness is a perfect humility, are revelations of Christianity which Milton well understood. They give an inexhaustible truth to all his compositions. His firm grasp of this truth is his weapon against the prelates. He celebrates in the martyrs, "the unresistible might of weakness." He told the bishops, "that instead of showing the reason of their lowly condition from divine example and command, they seek to prove their high preëminence from human consent and authority." He advises, that, in country places, rather than to trudge many miles to a church, public worship be maintained nearer home, as in a house or barn. "For, notwithstanding the gaudy superstition of some still devoted ignorantly to temples, we may be well assured that he who disdained not to be born in a manger disdains not to be preached in a barn." And the

following passage, in the "Reason of Church Government," indicates his own perception of the doctrine of humility. "Albeit, I must confess to be half in doubt whether I should bring it forth or no, it being so contrary to the eye of the world, that I shall endanger either not to be regarded, or not to be understood. For, who is there, almost, that measures wisdom by simplicity, strength by suffering, dignity by lowliness?" Obeying this sentiment, Milton deserved the apostrophe of Wordsworth:

> "Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
> So didst thou travel on life's common way
> In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
> The lowliest duties on itself did lay."

He laid on himself the lowliest duties. Johnson petulantly taunts Milton with "great promise and small performance," in returning from Italy because his country was in danger, and then opening a private school. Milton, wiser, felt no absurdity in this conduct. He returned into his revolutionized country, and assumed an honest and useful task, by which he might serve the state daily, whilst he launched from time to time his formidable bolts against the enemies of liberty. He felt the heats of that "love" which "esteems no office mean." He compiled a logic for boys; he wrote a grammar; and devoted much of his time to the preparing of a Latin dictionary. But the religious sentiment warmed his writings and conduct with the highest affection of faith. The memorable covenant, which in his youth, in the second book of the "Reason of Church Government," he makes with God and his reader, expressed the faith of his old age. For the first time since many ages, the invocations of the Eternal Spirit in the commencement of his books are not poetic forms, but are thoughts, and so are still read with delight. His views of choice of profession, and choice in marriage, equally expect a divine leading.

Thus chosen, by the felicity of his nature and of his breeding, for the clear perception of all that is graceful and all that is great in man, Milton was not less happy in his times. His birth fell upon the agitated years, when the discontents of the English Puritans were fast drawing to a head against the tyranny of the Stuarts. No period has surpassed that in the general activity of mind. It is said that no opinion, no civil, religious, moral dogma can be produced, that was not broached in the fertile brain of that age. Questions that involve all social and personal rights were hasting to be decided by the sword, and were searched by eyes to which the love of freedom, civil and religious, lent new illumination. Milton, gentle, learned, delicately bred in all the elegancy of art and learning, was set down in England in the stern, almost fanatic, society of the Puritans. The part he took, the zeal of his fellowship, make us acquainted with the greatness of his spirit, as in tranquil times we could not have known it. Susceptible as Burke to the attractions of historical prescription, of royalty, of chivalry, of an ancient church illustrated by old martyrdoms and installed in cathedrals,—he threw himself, the flower of elegancy, on the side of the reeking conventicle, the side of humanity, but unlearned and unadorned. His muse was brave and humane, as well as sweet. He felt the dear love of native land and native language. The humanity which warms his pages begins, as it should, at home. He preferred his own English, so manlike he was, to the Latin, which contained all the treasures of his memory. "My mother bore me," he said, "a speaker of what God made mine own, and not a translator." He told the Parliament, that "the imprimaturs of Lambeth House had been writ in Latin; for that our English, the language of men ever famous and foremost in the achievements of liberty, will not easily find servile letters enow to spell such a dictatory presumption." At one time, he meditated writing a poem on the settlement of Britain;

and a history of England was one of the three main tasks which he proposed to himself. He proceeded in it no further than to the Conquest. He studied with care the character of his countrymen, and once in the "History," and once again in the "Reason of Church Government," he has recorded his judgment of the English genius.

Thus drawn into the great controversies of the times, in them he is never lost in a party. His private opinions and private conscience always distinguish him. That which drew him to the party was his love of liberty, ideal liberty; this therefore he could not sacrifice to any party. Toland tells us, "As he looked upon true and absolute freedom to be the greatest happiness of this life, whether to societies or single persons, so he thought constraint of any sort to be the utmost misery; for which reason he used to tell those about him the entire satisfaction of his mind, that he had constantly employed his strength and faculties in the defence of liberty, and in direct opposition to slavery." Truly he was an apostle of freedom; of freedom in the house, in the state, in the church; freedom of speech, freedom of the press, yet in his own mind discriminated from savage license, because that which he desired was the liberty of the wise man, containing itself in the limits of virtue. He pushed, as far as any in that democratic age, his ideas of *civil* liberty. He proposed to establish a republic, of which the federal power was weak and loosely defined, and the substantial power should remain with primary assemblies. He maintained that a nation may try, judge, and slay their king, if he be a tyrant. He pushed as far his views of *ecclesiastical* liberty. He taught the doctrine of unlimited toleration. One of his tracts is writ to prove that no power on earth can compel in matters of religion. He maintained the doctrine of *literary* liberty, denouncing the censorship of the press, and insisting that a book shall come into the world as freely as a man, so only it bear the name of author or printer, and be respon-

sible for itself like a man. He maintained the doctrine of *domestic* liberty, or the liberty of divorce, on the ground that unfit disposition of mind was a better reason for the act of divorce, than infirmity of body, which was good ground in law. The tracts he wrote on these topics are, for the most part, as fresh and pertinent to-day as they were then. The events which produced them, the practical issues to which they tend, are mere occasions for this philanthropist to blow his trumpet for human rights. They are all varied applications of one principle, the liberty of the wise man. He sought absolute truth, not accommodating truth. His opinions on all subjects are formed for man as he ought to be, for a nation of Miltons. He would be divorced, when he finds in his consort unfit disposition; knowing that he should not abuse that liberty, because with his whole heart he abhors licentiousness, and loves chastity. He defends the slaying of the king, because a king is a king no longer than he governs by the laws: "it would be right to kill Philip of Spain making an inroad into England; and what right the king of Spain hath to govern us at all, the same hath the king Charles to govern tyrannically." He would remove hirelings out of the church, and support preachers by voluntary contributions; requiring that such only should preach, as have faith enough to accept so self-denying and precarious a mode of life, scorning to take thought for the aspects of prudence and expediency. The most devout man of his time, he frequented no church; probably from a disgust at the fierce spirit of the pulpits. And so, throughout all his actions and opinions, is he a consistent spiritualist, or a believer in the omnipotence of spiritual laws. He wished that his writings should be communicated only to those who desired to see them. He thought nothing honest was low. He thought he could be famous only in proportion as he enjoyed the approbation of the good. He admonished his friend "not to admire military prowess, or things in which force is

of most avail. For it would not be matter of rational wonder, if the wethers of our country should be born with horns, that could batter down cities and towns. Learn to estimate great characters, not by the amount of animal strength, but by the habitual justice and temperance of their conduct."

Was there not a fitness in the undertaking of such a person, to write a poem on the subject of Adam, the first man? By his sympathy with all nature; by the proportion of his powers; by great knowledge, and by religion, he would re-ascend to the height from which our nature is supposed to have descended. From a just knowledge of what man should be, he described what he was. He beholds him as he walked in Eden:

> "His fair large front and eye sublime declared
> Absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
> Round from his parted forelock manly hung
> Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad."

And the soul of this divine creature is excellent as his form. The tone of his thought and passion is as healthful, as even, and as vigorous, as befits the new and perfect model of a race of gods.

The perception we have attributed to Milton, of a purer ideal of humanity, modifies his poetic genius. The man is paramount to the poet. His fancy is never transcendent, extravagant; but, as Bacon's imagination was said to be "the noblest that ever contented itself to minister to the understanding," so Milton's ministers to character. Milton's sublimest song, bursting into heaven with its peals of melodious thunder, is the voice of Milton still. Indeed, throughout his poems one may see, under a thin veil, the opinions, the feelings, even the incidents of the poet's life, still reappearing. The sonnets are all occasional poems. "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" are but a finer autobiography of

his youthful fancies at Harefield. The "Comus" is but a transcript, in charming numbers, of that philosophy of chastity which, in the "Apology for Smectymnuus," and in the "Reason of Church Government," he declares to be his defence and religion. The "Samson Agonistes" is too broad an expression of his private griefs to be mistaken, and is a version of the "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce." The most affecting passages in "Paradise Lost" are personal allusions; and, when we are fairly in Eden, Adam and Milton are often difficult to be separated. Again, in "Paradise Regained" we have the most distinct marks of the progress of the poet's mind, in the revision and enlargement of his religious opinions. This may be thought to abridge his praise as a poet. It is true of Homer and Shakspeare, that they do not appear in their poems; that those prodigious geniuses did cast themselves so totally into their song, that their individuality vanishes, and the poet towers to the sky, whilst the man quite disappears. The fact is memorable. Shall we say that, in our admiration and joy in these wonderful poems, we have even a feeling of regret that the men knew not what they did; that they were too passive in their great service; were channels through which streams of thought flowed from a higher source, which they did not appropriate, did not blend with their own being. Like prophets, they seem but imperfectly aware of the import of their own utterances. We hesitate to say such things, and say them only to the unpleasing dualism, when the man and the poet show like a double consciousness. Perhaps we speak to no fact, but to mere fables of an idle mendicant, Homer; and of a Shakspeare, content with a mean and jocular way of life. Be it how it may, the genius and office of Milton were different, namely, to ascend by the aids of his learning and his religion—by an equal perception, that is, of the past and the future—to a higher insight and more lively delineation of the heroic life of man. This was his

poem; whereof all his indignant pamphlets, and all his soaring verses, are only single cantos or detached stanzas. It was plainly needful that his poetry should be a version of his own life, in order to give weight and solemnity to his thoughts; by which they might penetrate and possess the imagination and the will of mankind. The creations of Shakspeare are cast into the world of thought, to no farther end than to delight. Their intrinsic beauty is their excuse for being. Milton, fired "with dearest charity to infuse the knowledge of good things into others," tasked his giant imagination, and exhausted the stores of his intellect, for an end beyond, namely, to teach. His own conviction it is, which gives such authority to his strain. Its reality is its force. If out of the heart it came, to the heart it must go. What schools and epochs of common rhymers would it need to make a counterbalance to the severe oracles of his muse.

> "In them is plainest taught and easiest learnt,
> What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so."

The lover of Milton reads one sense in his prose and in his metrical compositions; and sometimes the muse soars highest in the former, because the thought is more sincere. Of his prose in general, not the style alone, but the argument also, is poetic; according to Lord Bacon's definition of poetry, following that of Aristotle, "Poetry, not finding the actual world exactly conformed to its idea of good and fair, seeks to accommodate the shows of things to the desires of the mind, and to create an ideal world better than the world of experience." Such certainly is the explanation of Milton's tracts. Such is the apology to be entered for the plea for freedom of divorce; an essay which, from the first until now, has brought a degree of obloquy on his name. It was a sally of the extravagant spirit of the time, overjoyed, as in the French revolution, with the sudden victories it had gained, and eager to carry on the standard of truth to new

heights. It is to be regarded as a poem on one of the griefs of man's condition, namely, unfit marriage. And as many poems have been written upon unfit society, commending solitude, yet have not been proceeded against, though their end was hostile to the state; so should this receive that charity which an angelic soul, suffering more keenly than others from the unavoidable evils of human life, is entitled to.

We have offered no apology for expanding to such length our commentary on the character of John Milton; who, in old age, in solitude, in neglect, and blind, wrote the Paradise Lost; a man whom labor or danger never deterred from whatever efforts a love of the supreme interests of man prompted. For are we not the better; are not all men fortified by the remembrance of the bravery, the purity, the temperance, the toil, the independence, and the angelic devotion of this man, who, in a revolutionary age, taking counsel only of himself, endeavoured, in his writings and in his life, to carry out the life of man to new heights of spiritual grace and dignity, without any abatement of its strength?

SHELLEY.

"Holy and mighty Poet of the Spirit
That broods and breathes along the Universe!
In the least portion of whose starry verse
Is the great breath the sphered heavens inherit—
No human song is eloquent as thine;
For, by a reasoning instinct all divine,
Thou feel'st the soul of things; and thereof singing,
With all the madness of a skylark, springing
From earth to heaven, the intenseness of thy strain,
Like the lark's music all around us ringing,
Laps us in God's own heart, and we regain
Our primal life ethereal! Men profane
Blaspheme thee: I have heard thee *Dreamer* styled—
I've mused upon their wakefulness—and smiled."

THOMAS WADE.

IT is now well nigh a score of years since Shelley set sail from Leghorn, for Lerici, in that treacherous boat which sank, with all on board, to the bottom of the Mediterranean. Long since have partizan critics ceased their attempts to cut off from all sympathy, and chance of fame, one, whose life of scarce thirty years was yet too long for the success of their

* *The Poetical Works of* PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. Edited by Mrs. Shelley. London. 1840.

Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations, and Fragments, by PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. Edited by Mrs. Shelley. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard. 1840.

[This Article upon Shelley is extracted from "The Dial;" see Preface. —ED.]

unworthy endeavors. No longer is the name of Shelley cast out from English society, or mentioned but with the expression of bitter and undisguised contempt. A late number of one of the leading British journals has, at length, acknowledged the preëminence of his genius: and hardly an Englishman now gazes at the pyramid of Caius Cestius, beneath the walls of Rome, who does not also turn a subdued eye towards the spot, that "might make one in love of death, to think one should be buried in so sweet a place," where, by the side of his friend Keats, lie the ashes of Percy Bysshe Shelley.

And now that the prejudice, which Shelley's career so naturally excited, has in a great measure died away; and now that, with the publication of these Poems and Essays, the evidence has closed, which at least the present generation is to have, in making up its judgment upon the merits and demerits of their author, we propose to lay before our readers a brief sketch of, particularly, his character and opinions. It is generally acknowledged at present, that during Shelley's lifetime his poetical productions were most wrongfully cried down by critics, who possessed not a tithe of the genius they so designedly ignored; that great as were his youthful follies, the manner in which he was commonly treated was as unkind and ungenerous, as it was injurious; and that damnable as were his errors, some of those who were the first to throw their stone at him, would have derived benefit from but touching the border of his garment. We do not wish to palliate the poet's unpardonable offences; nor do we design to prove the unbeliever to have been a Christian; but we think it merely an act of justice and charity to attempt to disinter his excellencies from the obscurity to which they have too long been consigned. And, surely, there should be no office more grateful than that of enlarging the sphere of human charity, by recalling to memory the smallest degree of virtue in those great men who have delighted us in song, instructed us in wisdom, or benefited us by action.

The complete works of Shelley have been presented to the public by his widow, unaccompanied by a full account of his life. The Editor has not only not given us the biographical information necessary for the formation of a sure judgment concerning the entire character and conduct of her late husband; but has even cut off all our expectation of ever receiving such a desirable bequest. Those actions, therefore, of Shelley, performed during his minority, which have left in public estimation a stain upon his name, have not been cleared up. What palliating circumstances might have existed; what extraordinary temptations may, in any slight degree, have extenuated his failings; what, after all, were the true motives from which alone his acts derived their moral character; of all this, quite the kernel of the whole matter, we still remain in ignorance. From all the evidence there is in the case, we are permitted to believe that the great practical mistakes which marred the daily beauty of Shelley's life, owed their origin, in a very remarkable degree, to antecedent theoretical mistakes. Touching this point, Moore has given us the following interesting testimony.

"Though never personally acquainted with Mr. Shelley, I can join freely with those who most loved him in admiring the various excellencies of his heart and genius; and lamenting the too early doom that robbed us of the mature fruits of both. His short life had been like his poetry, a sort of bright erroneous dream, false in the general principles upon which it proceeded, though beautiful and attaching in most of its details. Had full time been allowed for the over-light of his imagination to be tempered down by the judgment which, in him, was still in reserve, the world at large would have been taught to pay that high homage to his genius which those only who saw what he was capable of can now be expected to accord to it."*

* Moore's Life of Byron, vol. ii., p. 424.

It seems to have been from lack of that judgment, which was "still in reserve," together with excess of imagination, quick impulses, and an extraordinary love of intellectual freedom—not from gross passions and a vicious temper, that proceeded the numerous practical errors, which impaired both the happiness and usefulness of his life. Lord Byron, who lived on terms of intimacy with him in Italy, and who, amid his career of vulgar and desperate dissipation in that country, was more restrained, perhaps, by the purity of Shelley's counsels and example, than by any other influences, said of him, "You were all mistaken about Shelley, who was, without exception, the *best* and least selfish man I ever knew." Those who knew him best, were won by his estimable qualities, to speak of him in terms of highest praise; and the tender, constant, and passionate devotion he exhibited for the amiable and intelligent partner of his life, seems to have been most generously returned. Mr. Trelawney, a friend of his, pronounced him to be "a man absolutely without selfishness." Leigh Hunt, who was long and most familiarly acquainted with him, and has borne testimony to the excellence of his private character, in his "Recollections of Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries," among other things said, "he was pious towards nature, towards his friends, towards the whole human race, towards the meanest insect of the forest."

Though frugal in his personal habits, he was disinterestedly generous to his friends, to the poor, and the stranger. His temper, though naturally irritable, became sweet. While cherishing a cosmopolitan benevolence for the oppressed nations, unlike most world-reformers, he was kindly and affectionate to his immediate associates; his boldness of purpose and action was tempered by an almost feminine gentleness. The ardor with which he maintained and carried out in action his peculiar views, was relieved by mild forbearance towards those from whom he differed. Though subject to hot and tumultuous impulses, his tastes were pure, and his

sensibilities delicate. However pertinacious in his attachment to personal liberty, bordering upon license, he was still not a trespasser upon the freedom and rights of others. He was refined without being unmanly; trembling from nervous excitability, yet resolute almost to stoicism; chaste by nature, and not by restraint; simple, firm, free, unsophisticated.

So much are we bound to say in Shelley's favor; while we most deeply regret that a misguided understanding, rather than a corrupt disposition, should have led him to embrace many principles as fatal to his own peace, as deleterious in their influences on society. To his principles, false or true, he was inviolably faithful. Having formed, when a schoolboy at Eton, an unfavorable opinion of the English system of *fagging*, he at once set on foot a conspiracy among his mates for resisting it. Sent to Oxford at the early age of sixteen, and being there taught the elements of logic, he proceeded to apply these principles to the investigation of theological subjects; and when conducted to skeptical results, immediately printed a dissertation on the being of a God, in which he advocated sentiments that the authorities required him to retract; and upon his refusal, expelled him from the university in his second term. At the age of seventeen or eighteen, he married the pretty daughter of a retired coffee-house keeper; and this Gretna-Green match not turning out happily, from the very great dissimilarity in the characters and dispositions of the parties, they soon separated by mutual consent. Meanwhile, Shelley, having embraced the views of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, respecting the institution of marriage, not long afterwards, and before the suicide of his first wife, paid his addresses to and finally married Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. Acting in these and other instances on false principles, he notwithstanding acted on those which had already obtained, and through life continued to preserve, full possession of his faith.

Engaging in philosophical speculations with a fearlessness which no consequences could intimidate, and a singleness of mind that no considerations of personal interest could seduce, Shelley committed the great mistake, frequent among young inquirers, but unfortunately by no means confined to them, of putting a too implicit trust in the conclusions of his individual understanding. This stripling in his teens has his doubts about the infallibility of his teachers, notwithstanding the solemn authoritativeness of their decisions. This tyro in logic rejects, and rejects for ever, the faith of his fathers, the belief of his countrymen, the dogmas current for centuries in the cloisters of Oxford, the creed supported by the sanctity, learning, wealth, and power of almost universal Christendom. This freshman at the university rejects it, and accepts, in exchange, the convictions of his untaught, unripe understanding. We are amazed at this precocious self-confidence. Since the world began, men of the highest capacity have espoused different sides of the same great questions. The various races, nations, centuries, have entertained views, more or less peculiar, on matters of gravest concernment. Individuals of different temperaments, ages, sexes—individuals placed in dissimilar circumstances, dissimilarly educated, dissimilarly endowed, looking at truth from diverse points of view, have never agreed in their opinions; but at most, and at best, have been able only to agree to differ. And yet in the face of this important fact, we find Shelley, and the great majority of men besides, doggedly and uncharitably attached to the conclusions of their individual understandings. Many think they do well, if they only look down with self-complacent contempt, more or less disguised, on all who have the infirmity, or fault, of looking out of their own eyes; while some have not been able to stop short of blackening the names, or burning the bodies, or even damning the souls, of the poor wretches, who did not please to be of their way of thinking. This opiniativeness, in men who

have never had the means of learning any better, is, perhaps, not to be blamed; but in men, who are or aspire to be philosophers, it is pitiful.

Nowhere, perhaps, has this folly of wise minds been more conspicuous, than among the metaphysicians of Germany. Every system of philosophy, from that of Kant to that which Schelling still keeps in reserve, has constructed its foundations out of the ruins of its predecessors; and has claimed for itself to be the only true, orthodox system, without the pale of which there can be no saving knowledge. Doubtless every one—at least every one who knows anything about the matter—will acknowledge that there has been a regular and necessary advancement in philosophical science, as from Thales to Kant, so from the latter to Hegel, and the Schelling that is to be. But what we condemn is, not that every new German metaphysician has claimed to have carried forward his science, but that he has authoritatively set up his system as that in which alone all the facts of human nature have been observed, and their relations harmoniously explained, and confidently looked on himself as the last of God's prophets, after whose day there would be an end of all signs, visions, and revelations. It would seem almost like a fantastic trick in nature, to have endowed those persons who have showed the most incredulous skepticism towards other men's faiths, with the most superstitious credulity for their own; or rather, it would seem as though God bestowed upon the men of most original and powerful genius, at the same time the sincerest and intensest self-trust.

Shelley shared largely in this infirmity of noble minds. The firmness with which he grasped the conclusions of his intellect, was not more remarkable, however, than the singleness of purpose and boldness of spirit with which he acted from them. But for the irresistible attachment, that was born with him, to freedom of faith, speech, and action, the

boy of thirteen might have gained more prizes for writing Latin verses at Eton, than he actually did. At the university he was an apt scholar, and later in life showed himself to be such, by his acquisition of the German, Italian, French, Latin, and Greek languages, in the last of which he attained a high degree of proficiency, as well as by his acquaintance with metaphysics and natural philosophy; and he might have borne off blushing honors from Oxford. He was the eldest son of a Baronet, and instead of having been abandoned by him, after his expulsion from college, and his marriage, might at least have enjoyed the advantages of a support befitting the consequence of a young lord. He was offered a seat in parliament, and might have been one of the richest men in Sussex, could he only so far have compromised his principles, as to become the tool of a party. He had been endowed by nature with a graceful figure, with a face small, but beautifully turned, and full of sensibility, with a fair complexion, curling locks, and large, beaming eyes, and might possibly have won smiles from ladies of gentle blood and dazzling fortunes. He was a poet of highest song, and might have been flattered in newspapers and reviews, caressed in selectest circles, asked to dine at my lord's table, and walked daintily on flowers strewed in his way by beauty, wit, rank, and fashion. Thus would he have escaped the host of persecutors, who drove him from his country; he would have escaped the loss of his children by the first marriage, taken from him by the Court of Chancery on the alleged ground of his being an atheist; he would have escaped that sacrilegious blow, dealt by an Englishman personally unacquainted with him, who chanced to hear him mention his name for letters at a continental post-office; he would have escaped the paid and personal malice with which the London Quarterly so zealously supported the altars of Christ, the throne of England, and the critical chair of Mr. Gifford; he would have escaped

the cut direct of Christian friends too fastidiously afraid of contamination, to have even their feet washed with the tears and wiped with the hair of such a sinner.

So much did Shelley sacrifice for principles—principles, alas, in too many instances, unsound, and injurious. Still though disapproving these, and deprecating their influence on society, may we not commend the simplicity of heart, and heroism of character, with which he followed to their consequence the principles his judgment approved as just and fit? That the conclusions of a man's intellect should be erroneous, is indeed unfortunate, and generally a matter of blame; but that his heart be single, that his speech be sincere, that his acting be the full expression of his belief, that his force of passion support the unchangeableness of his will, so that its decrees come not short of the certainty of fate, that no soft whisper about forbidden fruit be permitted to foul the ear of his integrity, nor any selfish desire, covertly nestling in his bosom, to steal away the virginal purity of his disinterestedness—this is a matter of approval among all men, and enough to cover no small multitude of metaphysical sins. We may learn from Shelley other lessons, besides those of warning. And we wish that many a lazy advocate of orthodoxy would take of this unbeliever lessons in impetuosity. We wish that those who in order to be virtuous lack but the courage to be natural, who in order to become saints and heroes even need but to be themselves, who from their youth up have kept all the commandments, save that of not truckling to public opinion, when false and tyrannical, would set themselves free and public opinion right, by imitating the intrepidity of this "sickly sentimentalist." One may learn from Hercules, to beard the lion; from Napoleon, at Lodi, to charge at the cannon's mouth; from Martin Luther, to throw his inkstand at the Devil; but from Shelley—he may learn, when armed with principles—still more when they are not false ones, to fear not even *public opinion*.

What the opinions were, which Shelley so boldly formed, and independently expressed, we have now more adequate means of ascertaining since the publication of his Essays and Letters. These disclose to us very fully the sentiments and convictions that made the man, and controlled his conduct.

In Queen Mab, which he wrote and printed at the age of eighteen—though he never published it—he denied the existence of a God, who created the world, and was clothed with the attributes usually assigned to him by Christians.

> "Infinity within,
> Infinity without, belie creation;
> The exterminable spirit it contains
> Is nature's only God."

In commenting on this passage, in his Notes to this Poem, he says, "this negation must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit, coeternal with the universe, remains unshaken."

This and other irreligious views expressed in Queen Mab, though modified, doubtless, with the enlargement of his experience and the development of his intellect, were, however, notwithstanding the representations sometimes made to the contrary, never essentially changed. For when, in 1821, this poem was surreptitiously published by a London bookseller, Shelley wrote to the Editor of the Examiner as follows: "I doubt not but that the poem is perfectly worthless in point of literary composition; and that in all that concerns moral and political speculation, as well as in the subtler discriminations of metaphysical and religious doctrine, it is still more crude and immature. I am a devoted enemy to religious, political, and domestic oppression; and I regret this publication not so much from literary vanity, as because I fear it is better fitted to injure than to serve the sacred cause of freedom." Here is nothing like a distinct disavowal of his early opinions. And in a private letter to John Gisborne, Esq.,

he wrote about the same time as follows: "for the sake of a dignified appearance, and because I wish to protest against all the bad poetry in Queen Mab, I have given orders to say that it is all done against my desire." From this, it appears, that his regret on account of the publication of the poem proceeded from other causes than a fundamental change of belief.

The views of his later years respecting the Deity, not materially different from those of his youth, are quite distinctly expressed in his Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, written in 1816. His belief in an all-pervading Spirit appears from the following lines.

> "The awful shadow of some unseen Power
> Floats, tho' unseen, among us."

From this spirit of Beauty, which "to human thought is nourishment," from this awful Loveliness to which he looked "to set this world free from its dark slavery," he invokes a blessing on himself in the concluding lines of the hymn.

> "Thus let thy power, which like the truth
> Of nature on my passive youth
> Descended, to my onward life supply
> Its calm, to one who worships thee,
> And every form containing thee,
> Whom, Spirit fair, thy spells did bind
> To fear himself, and love all human kind."

In his short essay on Life, Shelley takes a pantheistic view of things. The words *I,* and *you,* and *they* are, according to him, merely convenient grammatical devices, totally destitute of the exclusive meaning usually attached to them, and no more than marks to denote the different modifications of the one mind. Moreover, he is an Idealist, receiving the Intellectual system as stated by Sir William Drummond, in his Academical Questions. He confesses that he is unable to refuse his assent to the conclusions of those philosophers,

who assert that nothing exists, but as it is perceived. He declares that the difference is merely nominal between those two classes of thought, vulgarly distinguished by the names of ideas, and of external objects. Putting these two views together, the God of Shelley turns out to be none other than Shelley himself. For though he modestly denies that his mind is anything more than a portion of the one universal intelligence, yet as he maintains that nothing exists save in the mind's perception, it follows, of course, not only that no material body, but also no spiritual being, can be proved to exist beyond the limits of his own mind. The latter is as much an hypothesis as the former; both fictions of the mind, for which no satisfactory proof can be given. There would remain accordingly, though Shelley himself disallowed the inference, in the dread immensity of space, nought save this one solitary mind, nought else would remain during the ages of a lonely eternity. "Nothing exists but as it is perceived." The forms of friendship, the eyes of love, the shapes of dear familiar things, are all but in the mind's eye. Our beloved homes, the temples of God, the noble ruins of antiquity, our mother earth, with all her fair array of cities, and streams, and vales, and mountains, and overspreading sky, the very Deity himself, have not the substance of thinnest air, and mock the dearest hopes of the soul of man.

Though professing the greatest admiration of the moral principles of Jesus Christ, and being in the habit of reading with great delight many, particularly the poetical, parts of the Bible, Shelley entertained a decided repugnance to the doctrines of the New Testament, and to the doctrinal teachings of the Christian clergy. He considered the Christian Church as pledged for the maintenance of bigotry, and the suppression of free inquiry. By requiring unquestioning belief in an irrational scheme of theology, by inculcating implicit reliance on the superior sanctity and wisdom of those supernaturally called to be other men's counsellors, and by

condemning to loss of reputation, or employment, or life even, with eternal punishment in the world to come, whomsoever embraced and acted upon principles at variance with the Pulpit and the Word, Shelley thought that the Church had been the nurse of pride, intolerance, and fanaticism. He affirmed the despotism of Christianity, which was eternal, to be worse even than the pernicious French and Material philosophy, that was but temporary. The only true religion, according to his view, was true love. Walking one day in the cathedral at Pisa, while the organ was playing, he said to Leigh Hunt, "What a divine religion might be found out, if charity were really made the principle of it instead of faith." So prejudiced was this unbeliever against Christianity, that he seems to have made little account of the salutary restraint it has imposed on the madness of human passion, the formal respect it has secured for virtue, even where failing to create a genuine devotion, the elevation of men from the dominion of sense to that of power unseen, and supernatural; moreover, the consolations it has ministered to bereavement, the patience it has supported in sickness, the contentment it has cherished under poverty, and the hopes it has made to bloom upon the grave. Also did he leave quite out of view the inspiration which poetry has drawn, the themes painting has borrowed, the forms architecture has learned, and the sublime melodies that music has caught from Christianity. He had even lived in Italy, and still expressly asserted that the influence of Christianity upon the fine arts had been unfavorable; he had travelled in France and Germany, and asserted that its influence had been unfavorable to philosophy; born and bred an Englishman, he asserted that it had been unfavorable to civilization. He sighed over the fate of the Grecian republics, displaced by the prevalence of Roman and Christian institutions; and amid all the blessings of modern science, law, and religion, vainly wished back again the unreturning Past.

Among the Essays of Shelley, is a fragment of a treatise on Morals, by which we are particularly informed respecting his views of the nature of virtue. The fragment has little worth, besides making us acquainted with the sentiments which Shelley himself entertained on this subject; and that also of proving that he possessed an insight into the springs of human character, which, when years had brought experience, and his understanding had more fully unfolded its resources, might perhaps have made a moralist out of the poet. He appears to have taken a strong interest in speculations on morals, as we infer from the following passage in one of his letters. "I consider poetry very subordinate to moral and political science, and if I were well, certainly I would aspire to the latter, for I can conceive a great work, embodying the discoveries of all ages, and harmonizing the contending creeds by which mankind have been ruled."

A virtuous action, according to his definition, is one designed and fitted to produce to the greatest number of persons the highest pleasure. The two constituent parts of virtue are benevolence, and justice; the former, the desire of being the disinterested author of good; and the latter, the desire of distributing this good among men, according to their claims and needs. By good, is meant that which produces pleasure; and by evil, that which produces pain. Shelley believed that the main aim of life should be the production and diffusion of the greatest amount of happiness. He did not, like Epicurus, make happiness to consist in sensual gratification; but in that enjoyment which accompanies the harmonious action of all the powers of man. Disallowing the gratification of no natural instinct, nor censuring the indulgence of passion and the senses, he still would subject the action of these baser parts of our nature to the control of enlightened reason and the most scrupulous conscientiousness. Every one of the faculties bestowed by God upon man should be allowed its just play and proportionate scope, the lower

being subordinate to the higher, the sensual to the spiritual, and reason being enthroned sovereign of them all. Reason he placed on the summit of man, not conscience; because conscience is a feeling that is blind, and dependent for its action upon the understanding and reason, the decision of which it follows, not guides. Other ends, which have been pointed out as the chief ones of life, were thought by him not to be ultimate. But when the greatest amount of the highest and truest happiness of which human nature is capable is aimed at, the mind is perfectly satisfied, asks no further questions, and is struck at once with the absurdity of still demanding a reason, why we ought to promote universal happiness.

In Queen Mab, Shelley calls necessity the mother of the world; and in the Notes, denies the self-determining power of the human will. He held that as well in the spiritual as the natural world, every effect must have its antecedent cause; that motives are the causes of volitions; and that, according to the formula of President Edwards, the will is always as the strongest motive. We have no reason to believe that Shelley ever changed his sentiments on this point. On the contrary, in his Speculations on Morals he represents the absurdity of refusing to admit that human actions are necessarily determined by motives, as similar to that of denying the equal length of all the radii of a circle. The charge of fatalism has frequently been made against these views of the necessarians, who agree in denying the self-determining power of the will; but without discussing the soundness or unsoundness of either system, we may take the liberty of stating our reasons for believing that they are not the same.

Fatalism is the belief, that the events which fill up our lives are determined by a will above us; necessity, that all these events take place according to the fixed laws of our nature. Fatalism teaches that let a man think, speak, or act as he please, or not think, speak, or act at all, the issues

of his life will be the same. Necessity teaches that our fate depends on our dispositions, judgments, and actions, modified by the natural influences of surrounding circumstances. Fatalism encourages a man to violate all laws human and divine, because in either case he is sure of God's approval and his own. Necessity warns him that every transgression of a law of his being will, sooner or later, receive its punishment, and no observance ever lose its reward; that the man who neglects the cultivation of the higher parts of his nature will fail in spiritual power and true happiness, and that he who exercises the meaner parts, condemns himself to low pleasures and a base lot; it admonishes him that, by the improper indulgence of vulgar passions, he will become their degraded bondman, until they shall have run their course, or, perchance, some dormant spiritual energy have awaked from its slumber to disenthral their dominion; it cautions him against relying upon the interposition of a self-determining will, to rescue him from the temptations with which he has tampered, and to trammel up the consequence of his failings, or his crimes; in a word, it enjoins the greatest care of one's intellectual and moral nature, by showing him, that he, and he only, is sure of his fortunes, who is sure of his capacity and his honor. The two systems have this point of union, that they both teach that God hath foreordained whatsoever things come to pass; but they differ fundamentally respecting the mode in which the divine decrees are realized. The believers in the one system surrender their fates to chance; those in the other perceive their well-being to lie in the fulfilment of established law. The one doctrine dishonors all human agencies; the other acknowledges them to be the only means by which are secured, or forfeited, the wisdom, virtue, and happiness of mankind.

We can conceive how Shelley, receiving the doctrines of those who deny the self-determination of the will, could still hold to a law of moral obligation. He, as well as the advo-

cates of the opposite theory, could experience a pleasing satisfaction, in acting according to the instructions of reason and the admonitions of conscience, and a feeling of painful degradation, in yielding to the suggestions of selfishness, or giving reins to the impulses of grovelling and destructive passions. This sense of pleasure and pain is the execution of a moral law, by which man's happiness is increased by acting in accordance with what in him is noblest, and diminished by sacrificing this high joy for the sake of selfish or sensual indulgence. The necessarian sees that he must take the consequences of his actions, and therein finds one of the strongest possible motives for giving good heed to them. The pains of life and the pangs of conscience he does not indeed consider so much punishment, as admonitions; nor the delights of the mind so much rewards, as encouragements. Remorse becomes, to him, regret, yet not the less painful, for his having acted from the lower, instead of the higher motives. The feeling of desert of praise is self-congratulation; of desert of blame, self-abhorrence. He does not hold himself accountable for what he has not the power to hinder, or help; but he does take the responsibility of whatever lies within the circumference of his utmost possibility.

In his Essay on a Future State, Shelley, arguing from reason and analogy, expresses views unfavorable to the future personal existence of the human soul. But the essay is unfinished, and from several passages in his works, we are led to hope and believe that this fragment does not give his entire views on this subject. In one of his letters he writes, "the destiny of man can scarcely be so degraded, that he was born only to die." And in a journal are recorded the following thoughts, suggested by a dangerous exposure of himself and Mrs. Shelley at sea: "Death was rather a thing of discomfort and disappointment than terror to me. We should never be separated; but in death we might not know and feel our union as now. I hope—but my hopes are not

unmixed with fear for what will befall this inestimable spirit when we appear to die." Mrs. Shelley, in speaking of the fragment on a future state, says, "I cannot pretend to supply the deficiency, nor say what Shelley's views were—they were vague, certainly; yet as certainly regarded the country beyond the grave as by no means foreign to our interests and hopes. Considering his individual mind as a unit divided from a mighty whole, to which it was united by restless sympathies and an eager desire for knowledge, he assuredly believed that hereafter, as now, he would form a portion of that whole—and a portion less imperfect, less suffering, than the shackles inseparable from humanity impose on all who live beneath the moon." It appears therefore that, with respect to the question of immortality, Shelley's mind was in a state of doubt, though often cheered by earnest hopes, at the time when death unexpectedly settled the question which had puzzled his brief span of life.

Shelley left also some speculations on Metaphysics, more fragmentary, and of less value even than those on Morals. His nature contained not the stuff which metaphysicians are made of. Imagination indeed he had enough of, and no power is more necessary than this in philosophical studies. It is the pioneer of the philosophical faculties. It opens the way for observation and experiment, which left to themselves know not in what direction to proceed, and find their way, if at all, but slowly, and by accident. Truly, indeed, must observation and experiment closely follow, though they cannot well precede, the steps of the conceptive faculty; for it is they who are to test its guesses, and authoritatively decide upon their correctness or incorrectness. In this way have been made the greatest discoveries. But the trouble with Shelley would have been, that his imagination not being supported by a sound judgment, and its modes of action not being in harmony with the spirit and constitution of things, he would have stood a fair chance of guessing wrong. He

would have displayed extraordinary fecundity in the production of erroneous hypotheses, with no gift of patience to subject them to the scrutiny of experiment. Besides, he would have been entirely wanting in the close and subtle logic, that makes the dialectician. He would have shared, with the great majority of his countrymen, their want of strict logical method, the surprising nonchalance with which they take for granted the premises of their arguments, the exceedingly tender examination through which popular axioms are made to pass in order to be admitted into the inexpugnable fortress of first truths. To the dialecticians of the broad land which lies between the Oder, the Danube, and the Rhine, have been bequeathed, it would seem, the pens of Heraclitus, Plato, and Aristotle.

But Shelley is better known as a disciple of social and moral Reform, than of metaphysics. He was offered a seat in Parliament; and at one time had some thoughts of becoming a politician; but fortunately, did not. He possessed hardly judgment enough for the well-ordering of his own life, much less for the judicious management of public affairs. He would, indeed, have been superior to most politicians, by the circumstance of having principles of some sort, by which to direct his movements; but, unfortunately, they would very likely have been false principles. In the senate, he would have displayed more zeal for the interests of men, than knowledge of them; more hatred of the short-sighted and corrupt selfishness in the midst of which he would have found himself, than of skill to bring it into subserviency to his purposes; more eloquence in advocating schemes for the speedy reform of the wide world, than insight into the real pressing wants of society, and the practicable means of relief. He would have succeeded no better than young men have since in demonstrating the superiority, in the guidance of national councils, of youthful inexperience, presumption, and impetuosity, over the prudence, sobriety, and wisdom of age;

and he would have distinguished himself, like other world-reformers, in the art of diluting the substantial consistency of his benevolence, for the sake of doling out the more to distant and remediless necessities, as well as by his aptness in overlooking home duties in his anxiety to extend the jurisdiction of his responsibility into the precincts of other men's concerns. Living at a time when the career of Napoleon was destroying many of the social and political forms in which society had existed since the middle ages, and inhaling freely the spirit of modern times, then first universally diffused, Shelley placed himself in the van of the revolutionary movement, and struck most passionately his lyre to celebrate the uprising of liberty in Spain, Greece, and Italy. Shelley was a radical of the school which seems not yet to have become quite extinct. He could not see that thrones and altars subserved any other than the purposes of tyranny; and he wished to have all men kings and priests for themselves. Having experienced, by his first marriage, the evils of ill-sorted matches, and being possessed with the spirit of Milton's doctrines on divorce, together with the more extravagant notions of Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, he openly advocated the substitution of the vow of love for the band of matrimony. Destitute of a true insight into the uses subserved by both poverty and riches in the system of economy, which God has established for the education and redemption of man, Shelley believed, with Sir Thomas More, in the desirableness of a community of property. What, after the annihilation of these institutions, he expected to have remaining, we will not undertake to inform our readers. Certain, however, it is, that by these changes he expected men would be great gainers in the power of self-government, in genuine piety, in chastity, and in happiness. Believing evil not to be inherent in the system of things, but to be an accident which might be expelled by the force of the will of man, he eagerly maintained that, by the prevalence of the

disinterested love which would everywhere spring up under the shelter of freer institutions, would be realized the renovation of nature, the perfection of man, and the defecation of human life of all its miseries.

The first mistake of this reformer was his over-estimate of the evils of the existing state of society. An invalid, he turned his mind too much from the consideration of the happiness which smiled around the fireside of the poorest peasantry, from the comfortable degree of freedom enjoyed even beneath the eye of the most despotic princes of Europe, from the amount of genuine virtue, bred in retirement, and of fair character, then adorning the households of all classes and conditions. His melancholy eye was keenest to detect everywhere the evidences of oppression, misery, and vice; and to the man, whose eye has not light in itself, all things indeed are darkness. It is true, that society had outgrown some parts of the framework which for centuries had encased it; but yet, not so as to occasion any very important hindrances to the liberal enjoyment of life, and the cultivation of enlightened character. The great and free soul is, indeed, always too large for the narrow rules of his times. But he does not so much need the support which factitious forms must minister to the immaturity of virtue, and to the imbecility of vice. He can walk alone, without help from stool or staff. Yet while the few spirits who have travelled on in advance of their age, may find the old conventional regulations less suited to themselves than to their contemporaries generally, the great majority of men find their highest welfare in diverging but cautiously from the beaten paths of past custom, and are generally farthest both from harm and mischief, while content to graze within their accustomed length of tether. Besides, most of the forms of society which Shelley enumerated among inherited evils, have descended to us from remote centuries, only because they grew naturally out of the instinctive depths of humanity, and are destined

alike for eternal duration and universal diffusion. For example, Shelley might have spared himself the pain he experienced in view of the unequal distribution of property. That poverty, for which no place can be found in the resplendent visions of a certain school of reformers, occupies a pretty important one in the great economy of God, would seem to be obvious enough from the simple fact, that the world over, from the beginning of time up to the present hour, men have been born, bred, and buried, in a condition not so far removed from starvation as from affluence. Our divine Maker seems hitherto to have thought that adversity had uses for man; that the soul might be rightly tempered by the ministry of sorrows; that fortitude might be hardened by self-denial; health promoted by temperance; learning pricked on by indigence; invention quickened by necessity; virtue purified by suffering; and, in fine, the best interests of the world secured by obedience to that first great law, "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." Besides, we are all poor. He feels his poverty, whose treasures are unequal to his desires. And when are they equal? Our plans outstrip our means; our wants increase with supply; by the cultivation of benevolence is enlarged the sphere of our charities; by the refinement of our taste, are multiplied the objects demanded for its gratification; with the growth of industrial enterprise, the demand is heightened for larger and still larger capital; by the improvement of our intellect are, an hundred fold, augmented the resources it would purchase from the costly labors of learning. There is little of much worth to man, but what he gets by his own labor, and little that he keeps, save by care; there is no situation in life walled in from the invasion of anxieties, sorrows, temptations, and toils as fatal—or rather as beneficial—as those which beset the door of poverty; and, in fact, the only satisfactory wealth to which man can attain, lies in resignation, in self-denial, in contentment, and in the

joyous consciousness of physical and mental ability. Finally, neither the plan of Shelley, nor any that we have heard advocated, much less any one that has been reduced to practice, is adequate to feed indolence from the earnings of industry, to supply heedlessness with the resources of forecast, and lavish upon prodigality the treasures which the laws of nature promise to virtue.

The second mistake of Shelley lay in his proposed means of reformation. He proposed to change institutions, not men. He attributed to the oppressive weight imposed upon society by barbarous laws and customs, its grovelling tastes, and degraded passions; and believed that with the bestowment of freer social, civil, and religious institutions would be given the virtue which overspreads life with blessings. That the only safe and the most important reform that can be effected in a nation, is a reform of the individuals who compose it, he did not perceive. Accordingly, we see him most interested in hailing the outbreak of foreign revolutions, in cheating his hope with visions of *Platonic republics*, and in watching the progress of all the measures in Parliament, which promised to change whatever was established in the social and political relations of his countrymen. Instead of endeavoring to improve men by cultivating their acquaintance, he courted the irresponsibility of cloistered seclusion, as appears from the following extract from one of his letters to his wife. "My greatest content would be utterly to desert all human society. I would retire with you and our child to a solitary island in the sea, would build a boat, and shut upon my retreat the floodgates of the world; I would read no reviews, and talk with no authors. If I dared trust my imagination, it would tell me that there are one or two chosen companions beside yourself, whom I should desire. But to this I would not listen." In the place of discharging the duties of a citizen of England, he travelled from place to place, and lived much upon the continent. His plans for

reforming Eton, and Oxford, resulted only in his early removal from the former, and his expulsion from the latter. About all he did to improve the homes of England was, to make himself an outcast from his own. Instead of illustrating by his example the benefits of domestic virtue, he caused the children of his early marriage to be taken from him by the Court of Chancery, and broke, as we are left to suppose, the heart of his first wife, however much devotion he may have felt for the second. Instead of conforming so far to the requirements of public opinion, as to enable himself to hold a place in society, from which he might have exerted a reforming influence by his conduct, and have gained an unprejudiced hearing for his opinions, he fulminated, by the bold avowal of doctrines shocking to the moral sense of the community, a declaration of war against the very society he aimed to reform.

But notwithstanding the unsoundness of most of the views Shelley entertained respecting the advancement of society, and the mistakes in his mode of procedure, we must still acknowledge that views, similar to some entertained by him, have been adopted in modern legislation. Capital punishments, the abolition of which he advocated, have become less frequent; the rights of the people have since received a more full acknowledgment in the English reform bill; the action of law has become more favorable to divorce, though the institution of marriage, it is hoped, will not be immediately dispensed with; the progress of civilization seems to have settled the maxim, that it is not so much the business of legislation to take care of the people, as to secure to them the opportunity of taking care of themselves, and that self-government, so far as it can be attained, is preferable to that of laws and constitutions. All the ameliorations of society seem to contribute to the independence of the individual. The modern applications of machinery tend to make him less dependent upon the labor of his fellow-men; the diffusion of

the means of education makes him rely less on the authority of the learned; the freedom of all trades and professions gives him a fair chance of securing a competency by his own exertions; the abolition of social caste opens his way to a station of gentility; the increase of intelligence throughout all classes, furnishes his mind with ampler means of happiness and of power; and thus, the general advancement in wealth, power, knowledge, and virtue, produces in the individual more self-control, self-reliance, and self-respect. We see this tendency towards individual independence, strikingly illustrated in Goethe, who having laid under contribution all the improvements of the age in building up his lofty genius, at last reposed on the summit of modern civilization in all the sufficiency of Jupiter on Olympus.

To Shelley must also be awarded the praise of having entertained a generous confidence in the perfectibility of man. His opinions on this subject, though, as we have already observed, by no means free from extravagance, were still conformable, in many respects, to the conclusions of reason, and the prophecies of scripture. They bespeak also a generous soul,—one whose consciousness of greatness was capable of high hopes of the humanity he shared in,—one which, having set its own aim high above the aspiration of vulgar ambition, seemed to discern that of the race shining at a height of still more inaccessible perfection.

These opinions of Shelley we have gathered mainly from his Letters and Essays. The latter are all fragments, except the Defence of Poetry. This is written in a style brilliant, graceful, and harmonious. The thoughts unite the beauty of poetry with the profundity of philosophy; and indicate an impassioned and enlightened devotion to his art. His letters are beautiful specimens of easy, familiar, epistolary writing. He appears in them, as he was, simple, free, and earnest. Those addressed to his wife combine, in a remarkable degree, tenderness with manliness. Those written from Italy are

exceedingly interesting, on account of the beautiful and discriminating criticisms they contain on the treasures of Italian art. In one of them, he thus finely and philosophically expresses his aim in these pleasing studies: "One of my chief objects in Italy is the observing in statuary and painting the degree in which, and the rules according to which, that ideal beauty, of which we have so intense, yet so obscure an apprehension, is realized in external forms."

As a poet, Shelley is not so popular as some others who have less merit. His immoderate love of allegory has rendered his style in many places obscure and cold; the metaphysical cast of thought does not supply to sensibility the excitement it craves from poetry; the long and lofty flights of his imagination tire the wings of duller fancies; while the occasional morbidness of his muse, together with his frequent attacks upon the established order of things in church and state, have sometimes repelled from his page the subjects of delicate feelings, and the friends of ancient observance.

In the power of his conceptive faculty, few will deny that he was unsurpassed by any of his contemporaries. His poetry is chiefly "the expression of the imagination." His mind was not also endowed, like Shakspeare's, with that large wisdom, that soundness of judgment, that wonderful tact in observation, which, directed to the real world, would have enabled him to see things as they are; but his unaided imagination filled immensity with the shapes of things that are not. But while he possessed, in such superabundance, the creative power of genius to form new combinations from the materials of real existence, it must be confessed that these combinations were oftener striking and beautiful, than analogous to reality, and illustrative of truth.

The fire of the impassioned poet burns most intensely and purely in his lyrics and smaller pieces, as in the Ode to the West Wind, Lines written in dejection near Naples, the

Cloud, and the Stanzas to a Skylark. Into these he breathed his entire soul. In the last-mentioned piece, suggested while listening to the lark carolling in the Italian heavens, he cannot find words enough to exhaust his passionate admiration; he cannot collect together images enough with which to compare the glad melodies of this spirit in the sky; nothing is to him so tender or ardent, nothing so sweet and joyous, nothing in sound that so fills the ear and the soul, as the spontaneous song of this bird, that singing soars, and soaring sings.

Love of the beautiful was another characteristic of Shelley's ge us. No eye was quicker to detect, or slower to turn from, e beauty wherein, according to his belief, consisted the divinity of things. The beautiful in the forms, colors, motions, and sounds of the external creation; the beautiful expression in the human face divine, and in the face of nature; the beautiful in language, thought, character, and life, was his constant study and supreme delight. For the cultivation of this native delicacy of taste, he devoted himself, as all poets should, to the study of the poetry of Greece. Sensibility to beauty was the characteristic trait of Grecian genius. It was beauty that the Greeks sung of in verse, beauty they sought in architecture, beauty they cut out from marble. Nor were their orators, historians, or even philosophers, wanting in this means of gaining the ear of their countrymen. Native to the soul of Greece, beauty overspread all her art, literature, and even life, as it did her vales, and isles, and seas, and skies.

Shelley was a complete master of all poetic measures, and had at his sovereign disposal all the treasures of the English language. His numbers are smooth, various, and musical; his language rich, tasteful, and expressive. Still, so thick-coming were his fancies, so subjective often the theme of his song, so ethereal the substance of his imaginings, so subtle,

abstract, idealized, were many of his conceptions, that not unfrequently he seems to labor in the pains of utterance. The main characteristic of his style has been thus pointed out by his Editor: "More popular poets clothe the ideal with familiar and sensible imagery; Shelley loved to idealize the real; to gift the mechanism of the material universe with a soul and a voice, and to bestow such also on the most delicate and abstract emotions and thoughts of the mind."

During his short and youthful life, Shelley made but infrequent excursions into the real world; and his experience in these was such, as to make him still more attached to his home in the ideal. From this fact resulted not only this peculiarity of style, but also most of the faults which are usually noticed in his poetry. Hence his cold allegories, his metaphysical splendors, the lack of human interest in his subjects, the meagreness of his cantos in incidents, the occasional subtlety, vagueness, and fantastic extravagancies of his, sometimes, too intellectual muse. Yet with all their deficiencies, whether in expression or thought, do these sons of genius, who, like Shelley, love too well to wander in the realms of fairy fancy, subserve no unimportant purposes in human life. To these imaginative minds, so unfit for the business of life, so disdainful of its drudgery, so unfamiliar with all the processes of the practical understanding, so destitute of common sense as to provoke the mirth and contempt of the vulgar, do we owe most of the miracles of art, and many of the greatest discoveries in science. They execute a divine behest in portraying with fascinating pencil the exceeding excellence of the ideal man, and the beauty of a perfect life; in deciphering the prophecies of coming greatness hid in the hieroglyphics, which cover the monuments of the past; in tracing the mystic analogies that so closely ally the worlds of matter and spirit; in pointing out in the spiritual expression of all terrestrial things the fulness and overflowing

of the Divinity, and in uttering from the depths of their divinely moved souls the sublime truths often revealed to those who are poorest in the wisdom of the world, and the most unfit for the marshalling of its affairs.

M. M.

LORD BYRON.

"If my inheritance of storms hath been
In other elements, and on the rocks
Of perils, overlook'd or unforeseen,
I have sustain'd my share of worldly shocks,
The fault was mine; nor do I seek to screen
My errors with defensive paradox;
I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe."

"Mine were my faults, and mine be their reward.
My whole life was a contest, since the day
That gave me being, gave me that which marr'd
The gift;—a fate, or will, that walked astray."

BYRON.

THE revolution in the character of imaginative literature, which has taken place in the present century, had its most violent and convulsionary manifestation in Lord Byron. In an article on Wordsworth in our last number, we referred to some of the external influences which stimulated the genius of the great poets of the age, and laid particular stress on spiritual philosophy and the French Revolution. These two agencies, of course, were modified by the individual peculiarities of the poets they influenced. Wordsworth, in whose

* *The Works of* LORD BYRON *in Verse and Prose, including his Letters, Journals, &c., with a Sketch of his Life.* New York: A. V. Blake. 8vo. 1843.

temperament the thoughtful element predominated over the impulsive, impressed on them the qualities of his own nature; and their effect on him is seen in the preëminence given in his writings to spiritual things and to humanity, to the imagination and the affections. On Byron, whose mind was naturally more under the dominion of sensibility, and rendered almost chaotic by suffering and error, the radical influences flowing from the French Revolution operated with more power, and were controlled by less moral and humane feeling.

Indeed, if any person can be pointed out as the mouthpiece of the harsher revolutionary spirit of his time, it is assuredly Lord Byron. The extraordinary popularity of his poems, and the notoriety of his life, have led to various essays on his character and writings, differing in object and mode of treatment, and all more or less one-sided. Denunciation and panegyric have both been lavished upon his name. Those who represent him as a fiend, seizing with a sort of diabolical instinct on all that is bad and impious, and overthrowing with a kind of ferocious energy all that is good and holy, and those who represent him as little less than a saint, seem equally to err; and the error of both arises in a great degree from an attempt to delineate a character which shall be consistent with itself. Byron may almost be said to have had no character at all. Every attempt to bring his virtues or his vices within the boundaries of a theory, or to represent his conduct as guided by any predominant principle of good or evil, has been accompanied by blunders and perversions. His nature had no simplicity or unity. He seems an embodied antithesis, —a mass of contradictions,—a collection of opposite frailties and powers. Such was the versatility of his mind and morals, that it is hardly possible to discern the connexion between the giddy goodness and the brilliant wickedness which he delighted to exhibit. His habit of mystification, of darkly hinting remorse for sins he never committed, of avowing virtues he never practised, increases the difficulty.

From his actions, his private journals and correspondence, his poems,—from all those sources whence we derive a consistent idea of other writers—it is hard to obtain a harmonious notion of him. It is quite easy to sustain any theory of his character, good, bad, or indifferent, by numerous extracts from his writings and undoubted events of his life. Friends or enemies need not droop for lack of materials to justify either blame or eulogy. Nothing can be more simple than to prove, that all in character and life which is ennobling and humane, and all that is debasing and inhuman, from writing hymns to parodying the ten commandments, found in him an able champion; and that crime and goodness both glittered with new attractions, when seen through the dazzling medium of his diction. From his life and works we obtain the impression, that he was a glutton, and an ascetic; a spendthrift, and a miser; a misanthrope, and a cosmopolite; an aristocrat, and a radical; an infidel, and a believer; a debauchee, and a mystic; a cynic, and a sentimentalist; a foul libeller of his species, and an eloquent defender of its rights, and a more eloquent mourner over its wrongs; bewailing and denouncing the literary revolution which made his own writings popular; pandering to a public which he despised; pilfering from authors whom he ridiculed; lashing his own bosom sins when committed by others; in short, a man continually busy in giving the lie to his thoughts, opinions, tastes, and conduct.

When we reflect upon this assemblage of clashing qualities, these odd irregularities of opinion and action, we are prone to consider him as what somebody calls Voltaire, "a miraculous child." He appears a mere collection of veering fancies and impulses, making the voyage of life aimless and rudderless, blown about by every breeze of desire, *tossed* about on every wave of passion. We can find in him no fixed principle of good or evil; no thorough-going worship of God or devil. Yet this comfortable conclusion seems only

to lead us deeper into the dilemma. Though apparently without any settled aim, no public man of his time could display a stronger will, could adhere to a purpose with more fixed and sullen obstinacy, could act out or write out with more power whatever he deemed fit. No poet ever stamped upon his writings a deeper impress of personality, or viewed outward objects in a manner more peculiar to himself. Every thing about him is intensely subjective, individual, Byronic, —whether writing "Childe Harold," or "Don Juan,"— whether sipping the waters of Hippocrene, or the stronger waters of Holland and the Rhine.

In his relations with the public we perceive the same consistent inconsistency. He does not appear to have formed any distinct notions of the dignity or the importance of the poet's vocation. It would be difficult for the most acute analyst to find in his writings what was his theory of human life. Some of his works were published merely, as he expresses it, to "make a row." Others were reflections of his moods, rather than his opinions. The volatile libertinism of Lucio, and the gloomy fierceness of Timon, he adopted at pleasure. Self is ever uppermost in his mind. The whole world is called upon to listen to a recital of the joys and agonies of George Gordon, Lord Byron. Amidst this most bewildering confusion of qualities and attributes, we are still conscious that one personality circles through and pervades them all. In his coquetry with the public, he seems at once a despot and a slave. He tells his thousands of readers, that they are formed of more vulgar clay than he is, that he despises them from his inmost heart, that their life is engaged in a bustling oscillation between knavery and folly, and that all mankind is but a "degraded mass of animated dust." Yet he demands their sympathy for all his idiosyncrasies, sins, and errors, and bends his stern pride to follow whatever path of popularity changing circumstances may point out. His mouth is ever at the public ear, though it pour forth

nothing but expressions of contempt and hatred. In whatever attitude he places himself, he evidently intends it to be one which shall excite admiration or horror. He could bear hatred, calumny, the imputation of profligacy, the denunciation of the powerful, the censures of the good,—any thing which carried with it fuel for his sensibility; but he could not bear neglect or indifference. An expression of contempt for any one of his works excited his ire more than the most hyperbolical expression of horror. The cool cockney, who said that "Don Juan" was "all Billingsgate," was lifted immediately into importance by the remark.

This dependence on the world, even on the weakest portion of it, by one who professed, in his towering misanthropy, to be superior to its praise or blame, is in marked contrast with the self-reliance of Wordsworth and Shelley. It was one of Byron's maxims, that the censure of the meanest of mankind is more painful, than the applause of the highest is pleasing. This was a singular opinion to be held by one who strove hard to rank himself among those "gigantic minds,"

> "Whose steep aim
> Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
> Thoughts which should call down thunder and the flame
> Of Heaven."

The unsettled condition of Byron's mind and character may be traced, in a great degree, we think, to the errors and calamities of his life. His misfortunes, however, enabled him the better to reflect the revolutionary spirit of his time. Suffering was his inspiration, and he gave utterance to the thousand and one miseries of his day. The poet of restlessness and impulse, his verse found an echo in many a heart whose unhappiness was voiceless. There was a great amount of passionate radicalism in the community, to which his poetry afforded strength and nutriment. He laid bare the cant of English society, and the corruption of the aristocracy, and

lashed them with a whip of scorpions. He illustrated and denounced the social tyranny, by which thousands are driven into crime and prevented from returning to virtue. The arrows of his scorn fell fast and thick among the defenders of political abuses. The renegade, the hypocrite, the bigot, were made to feel the full force of his merciless invective. Wielding an uncontrolled dominion over language, and profusely gifted with all the weapons of sarcasm, hatred, and contempt, he battled fiercely in the service of freedom, and knew well how to overwhelm its adversaries with denunciations and stormy threats, with ridicule and irony which should eat into their hearts, as rust into iron. He spoke with fiery energy and directness what was burning for expression in the hearts of thousands. The aggressive and destructive character of his political principles had a fierce charm for all whose passions had been wrought into intense or moody strength, by the contemplation of injustice and wrong. He gave voice not only to the political discontents of his time, but to the inward misery, the skeptical distrust of goodness and religion, the diseased sensibility, the half-formed opinions and mad impulses, which characterized the excitable spirits of his age. If he brought no balm to heal, he brought fire to stimulate. He was completely master of the whole rhetoric of despair and desperation. His wilfulness and caprice, the inconsistency not only between his writings and his conduct, but between one portion of his writings and another, far from injuring his influence, tended rather to add a new zest and interest to his compositions and actions. A man whose conduct is swayed by impulse instead of judgment, whose passions are dogmatic, while his intellect is skeptical, who has no distinct object in life to direct his energies, must necessarily exhibit the most glaring contradictions in his opinions and actions; and to these contradictions Lord Byron's sympathizing readers were as liable as himself.

It is a difficult task to determine how far the faults and

errors of Byron are to be attributed to original disposition, to bad culture, or to circumstances over which he had no control. He seems to have been born with violent passions, but not specially gifted with intellectual power. The carelessness with which his education was conducted, and some early wounds of vanity and affection, strengthened this natural predominance of impulse over thought. We can see in his youth the same tendency to individualism, the same reference of all things to a personal standard, which characterized his manhood. Early in life, he was accustomed to brood over the mortifications of his vanity and pride, and to indulge in tempestuous outbreaks of passion when he was crossed in his caprices. He gradually came to consider the world as made for him, and unconsciously to subordinate the interests and happiness of others to his own. This selfishness and self-exaggeration were the bane of his life. He seems never to have taken an enlarged and comprehensive view of society and the world, with reference to his own position in either. When he had committed some act of more than common turpitude, and reaped its natural results in sorrow and bitterness, he experienced a kind of grim satisfaction in throwing the blame upon others. If he had not been deformed in his foot, or if Miss Chaworth had not loved another, or if Lady Byron had not loved herself, the thing would not have happened. This tone of complaint was unmanly and boyish. It was more a revelation of the sufferer's weakness than of the world's injustice. At one time he seems to have seen through this thin self-deception, and acknowledged that

> "The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree
> I planted; they have torn me and I bleed;
> I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed."

But, generally, he appears to have been deluded by his passionate selfishness into the belief that his crimes were his misfortunes. This appears exquisitely ridiculous in Mr.

Richard Swiveller, and nothing but genius could ever have made it any thing else in Byron.

It was not until he felt the reaction of the selfishness and the opinions of others upon his own, that he revealed the energies of his nature. He certainly would never have been a great poet, had he been a contented man. The attempt to crush opposition, to compel others to acknowledge the claims of his selfishness, wrought his powers into intense action. His strength was the strength of madness and desperation. The first volume of his poems gives no evidence of the power afterwards displayed in "Cain" and "Manfred." They were probably admired by his friends, previous to their publication, and his vanity was satisfied. Then came the stinging and contemptuous *critique* in the Edinburgh Review. The rage which this provoked was the inspiration of the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." It is amusing to observe, in this publication, how he not only wreaks vengeance on his reviewer and on all connected with him, but runs a-muck through the streets, and stabs every author that comes in his way. His wounded pride demands a whole hecatomb of victims, the innocent as well as the guilty. It would seem as if the most superficial consideration must have taught him, that many of the feeble poets whom he lashed had only committed his own sin, that of publishing trifling verses, which had been unduly puffed by journals of little authority; and that the severity of his attack upon them was only a confirmation of the justice of the *critique* on himself. But the pith and nerve of his invective indicated that his mind in its "Hours of Idleness," was a very different thing from his mind in its hours of excitement. The success which his vigorous, but indiscriminate, satire met was balm to his irritated pride; but it pampered some qualities of his nature, which it would have been for his happiness to have stifled. It told him, that he possessed power to fight his way through the world, and to overbear any opposition to his conduct,

no matter on what principles of right or wrong it was founded.

We think that this egotism or selfishness in Byron was the parent of many of his vices, inasmuch as it emancipated his mind from the burden of those duties which grow out of man's relations with society. Feeling conscious of strong impulses, and taking pleasure in asserting his independence of the world's code of opinion, he early plunged into vicious excesses. It is well known, that the time which elapsed between the publication of the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," and his first visit abroad, was not spent in practising the "Whole Duty of Man." The recklessness with which he indulged in libertinism, was only equalled by the detestable coolness with which he referred to it. In a letter to Hodgson, in 1810, he makes the candid confession, that he has found "that nothing but virtue will do in this d——d world. I am tolerably sick of vice, which I have tried in all its agreeable varieties, and mean, on my return, to cut all my dissolute acquaintance, leave off wine and carnal company, and betake myself to politics and decorum." On his return to England, he changed this amiable determination, so far as decorum was concerned, though he paid some little attention to politics. The publication of the first and second cantos of "Childe Harold," the great and immediate fame which attended it, and his introduction to the "world of London," to run a new career of brilliant profligacy, constituted one of the eras of his life. Up to this time, his bad qualities do not appear to have become hardened, and, though licentious and careless of restraint, he could hardly be called extremely dissolute. The power of his genius, likewise, had not been fully developed by circumstances. His mind was also very unsettled, and might, perhaps, have received a much better direction than it took. In his letters and journals during the period which followed, we see him in a variety of aspects,—sorrowful, misanthropic, proud, vain, "every thing by turns, and nothing long." He

seemed determined to drain the wine of life to the dregs, and to excel in all the pleasant methods of disposing of health, peace, and happiness, which a great metropolis affords. There is a singular blending of flippancy and desperation in his letters and journals at this period. The profanity, ribaldry, and brilliancy with which they are garnished, the striking thoughts and fancies with which they teem, and the mode of life and condition of mind which they reveal, can hardly be paralleled in the private records of any other man of genius. His ambition was both high and mean, and seemed bent on those objects which would redound to his shame, as well as those which would crown him with glory. He mingled with the wise, the learned, the witty, the beautiful, the dissolute, with equal ease; and he appeared determined to be excelled by none either in literature or licentiousness. He aimed at being both a poet and a man of the world—Plato and Lord Rochester in one. The impressibility of his mind led him to adopt the standard of each company into which he was thrown. He gradually lost all moral fear. Every thing sacred in life, religion, affection, sentiment, duty, virtue, he could as easily consider matter for mirth as for serious meditation. His love of epigram overcame his moral sentiments and his poetic feeling. His wit was great, for the very reason that it had no restraint from his conscience, and invaded sanctuaries into which the wit of others hesitated to enter. Since the publication of his letters, we discover that his wife, his most intimate friends, even his own cherished feelings, were not safe from its shafts. His whole correspondence is characterized by a brilliant recklessness, in which profanity and coarseness are prominent elements. His letters are richly studded with those emphatic expletives with which wagoners favor their horses.

But it was not until Byron left England for the second time, and for ever, that the condition of mind which his irregularities produced was fully displayed to the world. He went

burning with indignation at real or imagined wrongs, and smarting with the consequences of his errors. From this period, his hatred and contempt of the world deepened in intensity and power, and lent a corresponding strength to his faculties. His residence on the continent filled the measure of his glory and his shame. The splendor, fertility, and daring of his mind, and the hoarded scorn and fiery passion of his heart, were allowed to have full and free expression. His genius "fed on poisons," and they became nutriment to it. There was the same inconsistency in his conduct and writings as before, but his capacity for good and evil had both increased. In almost everything that he wrote, while on the continent, we perceive the mark of great talent. His letters from Italy, alone,—things thrown off in every variety of mood, and some of them bearing strong evidence of the bottle,—display more genius than can be found in all the first two cantos of "Childe Harold." His mind, restrained by no permanent feelings of delicacy, of decorum, of moral or religious duty, and stirred into action by such powerful stimulants as revenge and scorn, developed capacities of which his previous writings had given little evidence. The most sublime and beautiful, as well as the most debasing, portions of his writings, belong to this period of his life. "The Corsair" seems tame when compared with "Cain;" and the misanthropy of "Lara" appears weak beside the misanthropy of "Manfred." The vivid imagination, which glows and glitters in the flood of passionate feeling that overwhelms the reader in the fourth canto of "Childe Harold," had absolutely no existence in the "Hours of Idleness." And nothing that he had written could boast the variety of description, the wit, the satire, the knowledge of the world, the grace and affluence of fancy, the sovereign command of expression, which surprise and delight us amid the filth and mockery of "Don Juan."

Over all these works, amid their most brilliant shows of

wit and imagination, are thrown the sable hues of misanthropy and despair. They are all held in the bondage of one frowning and bitter feeling. They all bear the impress of one versatile, but not comprehensive, mind. They are all fruits of one individual's peculiar experience of life. They all display the gulf of darkness and despair, into which great genius is hurried, when it is delivered over to bad passions. The lesson they teach is degrading. It casts doubt and insecurity on the noblest objects of life. It is the philosophy of madness and misery, teaching that all happiness is shadowy, all aspiration futile.

> "We wither from our youth, we gasp away—
> Sick—sick; unfound the boon—unslaked the thirst,
> Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
> Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first—
> But all too late,—so are we doubly curst.
> Love, fame, ambition, avarice—'t is the same,
> Each idle—and all ill—and none the worst,
> For all are meteors with a different name,
> And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame."

Such consolatory philosophy as this would not seem to carry with it any charm, derived either from its truth or its attractiveness. Though it speaks for the human race, it is still but the diseased experience of one heart, having no general truth either in the nature of man or the nature of things. It is no more philosophical than it would be for a thief, on his way to the gallows, to conclude that men were born to be hanged,—or for a bad poet, on his way to oblivion, to conclude that books were written to be damned. Misanthropy is a malady of the mind; all men are not misanthropical, any more than all men are diseased. In itself, this condition of the soul has few attractions, except for those who can sympathize with it, or whose own experience echoes its teachings. But in Byron it is often accompanied by qualities which either soften its harshness, or give it alto-

gether the lie. It is most seductive when blended with things whose reality it denies. The gloom of his meditations is laced with light in all directions. Touches of pathos, tributes of affection, gushes of passionate feeling, gleams of beauty, kindling utterances for freedom and humanity,—these continually appear in company with a cynicism which sneers at the objects to which they appeal, or despair which doubts their existence.

We now propose to hazard a few observations on the nature of Byron's perversions of his genius, followed by an examination of the spirit which animates "Manfred" and "Cain," and concluding with some acknowledgment of the force of his delineations, and the exquisite delicacy of some of his perceptions of beauty and goodness. It is hardly possible to do this without a seeming inconsistency; for a distinction is to be made, not only between his life and his writings, but between one portion of his writings and another. We must admit, that, however Satanic some of his compositions may be, and however depraved the tone of much of his meditation, he never lost a keen perception of the pure and the beautiful; and that, in action, he was neither so bad nor so good as he was in thought.

Byron's misanthropy, real or affected, sometimes induced him to give prominence to qualities essentially unpoetical. The frequent perversion of his powers, and the unhealthy moral atmosphere which surrounds some of his most splendid creations, have given point to a sarcastic epigram, which declares that his ethical system is compounded of misanthropy and licentiousness, the first command of which is, "Hate your neighbour, and love your neighbour's wife." Coarse appetites, selfish passions, flippant impieties, a sullen hatred of mankind—things generally deemed base and degrading in themselves—he could so represent, by cunning tricks of diction, as to confer upon them a factitious beauty and dignity. "Paint not the sepulchre of thyself, and strive not

to beautify thy corruption," was a remark of an old English writer, and Byron might have practised on it to advantage. If we analyze some of the beautiful passages in "Manfred" and "Childe Harold," we shall find that the beauty is rather in appearance than in substance, in the outward show and dress of the sentiment rather than in its spirit, in words more than in ideas. Translated into plain prose, they would seem either horrible or laughable. In this, one of Byron's many characteristics, he reverses a peculiarity of Wordsworth. The latter evolves the latent beauty residing in objects which appear mean and unpoetical to the eye; Byron casts the drapery of the beautiful over things intrinsically mean and bad, and renders them poetical to the eye. Wordsworth would experience the same satisfaction in delineating a peasant or a pedlar, which Byron would find in drawing a philosophical debauchee or a sentimental pirate. The former, placing a confiding trust in the essential dignity and elevation of his theme, is contented with simplicity of diction; the latter, feeling the unworthiness of his subject, dazzles and blinds the eye with a blaze of words. If Wordsworth is inclined to make poverty and peasants too elevated, Byron is disposed to make piracy and robbers too respectable. Both superadd imaginary attributes upon the realities which the names of their characters suggest; but one aims to shed beauty over humble virtue, the other labors to make vice splendid.

If Byron, in his bitter and reckless moods, took pleasure in idealizing the bad, he received no less in degrading the ideal. To his haughty and self-aggrandizing will, it seemed that the force of his genius could alter the relations and distinctions of things, and make both the moral and natural world dependent on the caprices of his sensibility. His readers were to be his vassals, and reflect the changes of his own feelings. He loved power for its own sake, and took delight in its mere exercise. An impulse or a whim he would obey, as

other men obey a law or a principle. And then he seems, at times, a mere actor, with the world for his audience, striving to produce brilliant effects, and by no means careless of the applause of the pit. "Don Juan," it is probable, best reflects his mind and character in their general aspects. It resembles his private letters and journals more than any of his other works. It is full both of intensity and recklessness. Pictures of beauty are painted with hues "that are words, and speak to ye of heaven," only to be rudely daubed with an impatient dash of the same pencil that wrought their exceeding loveliness; majestic edifices are erected, only to be overthrown; statues, full of life and earnest feeling, are created, only to be dashed petulantly to pieces.

Indeed, Byron experienced great delight in producing those "brisk shocks of surprise," which come from the yoking together of the mean and the exalted, the coarse and the tender. Some of these do little credit to his heart, and, in fact, cast "ominous conjecture" on the truthfulness of his feelings. Thus, in the description of Haidee leaning over the sleeping Juan, one of the most beautiful pictures in poetry is sacrificed to the scoffing demon of his wit:

> "Like to an angel, o'er the dying
> Who die in righteousness, she leaned; and there
> All tranquilly the shipwrecked boy was lying,
> As o'er him lay the calm and stirless air.
> But Zoë the mean time some eggs was frying;
> Since, after all, no doubt the youthful pair
> Must breakfast, and betimes—lest they should ask it,
> She drew out her provision from the basket."

Again, a most warm and fanciful description of a rainbow closes in imagery drawn from pugilism:

> "A heavenly chameleon,
> The airy child of vapor and the sun,
> Brought forth in purple, cradled in vermilion,
> Baptized in molten gold, and swathed in dun,

Glittering like crescents o'er a Turk's pavilion,
And blending every color into one,—
Just like a black eye in a recent scuffle
(For sometimes we must box without the muffle)."

A fine poetic consecration of one of the holiest feelings of the human heart, in "Childe Harold," ends with a touch of misanthropy, conceived in the very ingenuity of despair:

"When the wife,
Blest into mother, in the innocent look,
Or even the piping cry of lips that brook
No pain and small suspense, a joy perceives
Man knows not,—*when from out its cradled nook*
She sees her little bud put forth its leaves,
What may the fruit be yet?—I know not—Cain was Eve's."

A great deal of this perversion of imagination and levity of feeling, in Byron, we are willing to attribute to wayward-ness or affectation. But there are passages in his works, which are not merely licentious in tendency, but openly obscene. The higher literature of the present century is, in general, untainted with that impurity of thought and gross-ness of expression, which have too often characterized other brilliant periods of English letters. Lord Byron has the questionable honor of being an exception to this remark. Some portions of his works, for ribaldry and impiety, fairly bear off the palm from all other dabblers in dirt and blas-phemy. At one period of his life, towards its close, he seems to have felt no responsibility to the world or to his own fame in the exercise of his talents. Much of this recklessness is, doubtless, to be laid to the intense bitterness of many of his miseries. In these moods, however, though his wit is often keen and his fancy affluent, he rarely raises a hearty laugh. The unhappiness which prompts the malignant jest is seen and felt, amid all the vivacity and glare of the expression. A person unacquainted with the character of Byron would

infer from these bold and bad portions of his poems and letters, that his soul was the seat of obdurate malice. They seem to illustrate what Dr. Johnson calls "the frigid villany of studious lewdness, the calm malignity of labored impiety." They are singularly hard, cold, almost inhuman, in their tone of wickedness. They have none of that soft and graceful voluptuousness, with which poets usually gild and humanize sensuality, and of which Byron himself was, when he pleased, so consummate a master. To denounce them in the usual language applied to immoral works would not do justice to the depth of their turpitude. They enable us to understand what the old scholastic meant, when he called poetry "the devil's wine." They carry us back to the brilliant depravities of Congreve and Wycherly, when virtue was a jest, and piety the mark of a despised Puritan; but they are permeated with a power, to which those rakes of the drama could present no claim. To judge of Byron, however, by these alone, or to build up a theory of his character with these as a basis, would be to do him injustice. In themselves, they are worthy only of unalloyed detestation; but they merely illustrate one of the numerous phases of the author's nature. They are the foul offspring of those moments when he hated himself, the world, and heaven; when all the bitterness of irreligion and misanthropy, and all the noisome vapors arising from the dregs of bad passions, were blended in a frightful union with art and imagination; the reaction from those moods, when, to use his own words,

> "His mind became,
> In its own eddy, boiling and o'erwrought,
> A whirling gulf of fantasy and flame."

We do not wish to dwell on these foul blots on Byron's fame, or to penetrate into those recesses of his heart where they had birth. Misanthropy, when displayed in wit, satire, and mockery, is a more pitiable object than misanthropy in the darkest hues of despair. It is in "Cain," "Manfred,"

and the fourth canto of "Childe Harold,"—especially in the two former,—that we are to look for the prominent features of Byron's peculiar view of life, and the nature of his influence upon his age. This leads us to the consideration of what Southey stigmatised as the "Satanic school of poetry," or the poetry of sin. In the works to which we have referred, Byron gives us the heroism of wickedness and misery,—guilt, conscious of itself, and wrung with remorse, yet proud of its power of endurance, and daring and defying heaven and hell, in the full view of the consequences of its acts. It is remorse without repentance,—misery that seeks neither hope nor alleviation. All weak emotions are discarded from its dark catalogue of crime and suffering. It deifies self-will, and is impatient of imperfection, not of good but of evil. The bonds of clay, that check the energies of the mind, it feels as a limitation and a curse. It plucks its illustrations from those aspects of nature, where life flourishes in desolation, and is triumphant over all obstacles to its growth and strength:

> "From their nature will the tannen grow
> Loftiest on loftiest and least sheltered rocks,
> *Rooted in barrenness*, where naught below
> Of soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine shocks
> Of eddying storms; yet springs the trunk, and mocks
> The howling tempest, till its height and frame
> Are worthy of the mountains from whose blocks
> *Of bleak, gray granite* into life it came,
> And grew a giant tree;—the mind may grow the same."

The answer of this misanthropy to all entreaties for repentance is, in the moody phrase of Manfred,—"It is too late." It can exist without happiness. Cain asks Lucifer, in reference to the rebel angels,—

> "Are ye happy?
> *Lucifer.* *We are mighty.*
> *Cain.* Are ye happy?
> *Lucifer.* No! Art thou?"

But if happiness be not needed, neither is there a sting to death, though the soul be laden with unrepented sins. The last words that Manfred utters, as he turns his glazing eyes to the man of God by his side, are the most awful in the drama:

"Old man! 't is not so difficult to die."

That is, hell can be borne!

Suffering, in natures thus lifted from the mass, and strong in the heroism of despair, needs no aid from piety and human feeling, but can be endured unshrinkingly by the mind,— "itself an equal to all woes."

"Existence may be borne, and the deep root
Of life and sufferance make its firm abode
In bare and desolated bosoms: mute
The camel labors with the heaviest load,
And the wolf dies in silence."

Prometheus, whose "impenetrable spirit earth and heaven could not convulse," is the ideal of this patient endurance of torture; for Byron was not ever the champion of noisy miseries and talkative despair, but could feel the power of

"Silent suffering, and intense;
The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
All that the proud can feel of pain,
The agony they do not show,
The suffocating sense of woe,
Which speaks but in its loneliness,
And then is jealous, lest the sky
Should have a listener, nor will sigh
Until its voice is echoless."

Hope and joy, to this stern misanthropy, are bubbles that break in every breath of experience. No one can escape the inevitable doom. The only relief is to be sought in a sullen endurance of misery, which takes a grim delight in the consciousness of the capacity to suffer; or in a strength of will, which would scale the "cherubim-defended battlements" of

heaven, and quail not before the "fire-armed angels," in its rhapsodies of meditation. Those who, when once deceived by hope, weave again the same web of delusions, only fall deeper into the pit of wretchedness or meanness:

> "Some bowed and bent,
> Wax gray and ghastly, withering ere their time,
> And perish with the reed on which they leant;
> Some seek devotion, toil, war, good, or crime,
> According as their souls were formed to sink or climb."

Life, at the best, is an evil. Pain and suffering track the happiest. Only in the stern defiance or endurance of evil can the soul find any stability.

> "Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
> Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
> And know, whatever thou hast been,
> 'T is something better not to be."

It is almost needless to say, that Byron never reached the point of indifference to misery and hatred of the world, which he loved to contemplate. This was his ideal of greatness, and he never realized it. It had a charm for his swift passions and his daring fancy; but he was too weak and veering to practise it consistently in life. He was no hero, either in the service of Satan or the service of heaven. But he had a large inward experience of that condition of the heart, from which the devilish in conduct flows; and he has represented it with marvellous force and skill. In "Manfred," especially, he has arrayed the Satanic aspect of life in a gloomy majesty, which makes it act powerfully on the imagination. A kind of shuddering sympathy is awakened for the hero. The stormy emotions which convulse his being; the demoniacal pride with which his agonies are borne; the intensity and might of passion, which breathe and burn in almost every word he utters; the picturesque sublimity of the scenes in which the action of the piece

passes; the occasional touches of quiet beauty and holy sentiment; which shoot across the ravings of remorse, or twinkle in the sombre imagery of despair; and the continuity of the feeling which overspreads and pervades the whole drama;—all these give to the work a singular fascination, from which it is difficult to escape. Manfred represents a man of superhuman pride and superhuman ambition,—bound by no moral laws, which yet have the power to scourge him,—hating the world and his kind, and seemingly fated to be a curse to himself, and to all who meet him either in love or hate. In his confessions to the Witch of the Alps, we have a most distinct statement of that disgust for mankind, that yearning after superhuman knowledge, that wild search in the loneliest and most tempestuous aspects of nature for sympathy with inward emotions, with which the writings of Byron teem. He says,

"From my youth upward,
My spirit walked not with the souls of men,
Nor looked upon the earth with human eyes;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine;
The aim of their existence was not mine;
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,
Made me a stranger; though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh."

In another connexion, he represents himself as having had in his youth noble aspirations to sway the minds of men, and to be the enlightener of nations; but his thoughts "mistook themselves:"

"I could not tame my nature down; for he
Must serve who fain would sway,—and sooth—and sue—
And watch all time—and pry into all place—
And be a living lie—who would become
A mighty thing among the mean; and such
The mass are. I disdained to mingle with
A herd, though to be leader—and of wolves.
The lion is alone, and so am I."

The crime which lends such mysterious horror to the remorse and despair of Manfred is one which the pen hesitates to write. It is but obscurely hinted in his wild utterances. But its remembrance is to him continual torment:

"Look on me in my sleep,
Or watch my watchings. Come and sit by me!
My solitude is solitude no more,
But peopled with the Furies. I have gnashed
My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
Then cursed myself till sunset;—I have prayed
For madness as a blessing—'t is denied me."

In the description of her whom he loved, and whom he destroyed, whose heart withered when it gazed on his,—a passion terrible in its consequences both to him and to her,—some traits of his own character and the Satanic character are thrown in by contrast:

"She was like me in lineaments—her eyes,
Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone
Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;
But softened all, and tempered into beauty:
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind
To comprehend the universe! nor these
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine,
Pity, and smiles, and tears—*which I had not;*
And tenderness—but that I had for her;
Humility—*and that I never had.*
Her faults were mine—her virtues were her own."

We cannot refrain from making one more extract from this drama, in illustration of the inspiration of evil from which it takes its character, and the theory of sorrow and misery, as well as grandeur, which it inculcates.

"There is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age,
Without the violence of warlike death.

Some perishing of pleasure—some of study—
Some worn with toil—some of mere weariness—
Some of disease—and some of insanity—
And some of withered or of broken hearts;
For this last is a malady which slays
More than are numbered in the lists of Fate,—
Taking all shapes and bearing many names."

There is something noble in the roll of these lines, which dignifies the pride and bitterness of soul from which they proceed.

The tremendous depth and intensity of passion, which Byron was capable of representing with such marvellous skill of expression, is powerfully displayed in his misanthropical creations, and lends to them much of the sorcery they exercise on the feelings. When once we are fairly borne along the foaming and glittering tide of his impulsive genius, it becomes hard to muster any moral scruples as to the direction of the flood. Few poets excel him in the instantaneous sympathy he creates, even among minds having no natural affinity with his own. He is eminently the poet of passion. In almost all the changes of his mood, the same energy of feeling glows in his verse. The thought or emotion uppermost in his mind at any one time, whether it be bad or good, seems to sway, for the moment, all the faculties of his nature. He has a passionate love for evil, a passionate love for nature, for goodness, for beauty, and, we may add, a passionate love for himself. When he sits in the place of the scoffer, his words betray the same inspiration from impulse,—the same passion, though condensed into bitterness and mockery. If we carefully observe the thoughtful and tender portions of his writings, we shall often find that the tenderness is but

"Moonlight on a troubled sea,
Brightening the storm it cannot calm."

Restlessness is the characteristic of his nature. He himself speaks of his verse as bearing him onward as the wind bears the cloud; and his hatred of restraint and "proud precipitance of soul" are well expressed in his exulting gladness at being again on the boisterous element he loved:

"Once more upon the waters!—yet, once more!
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar!
Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead!
Though the strained mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,
Still must I on; for I am as a weed
Flung from the rock, on ocean's foam, to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail."

The force of passion with which he could express his sense of individual wrong, and his power of carrying the heart with him in his sorrowful consecrations of his own miseries, are displayed with a wild and smiting energy of utterance in the following stanzas:

"And if my voice break forth, 'tis not that now
I shrink from what is suffered: let him speak
Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,
Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak;
But in this page a record will I seek.
Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak
The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,
And pile on human heads the mountain of my curse!

"That curse shall be Forgiveness. Have I not—
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it Heaven!—
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not suffered things to be forgiven?
Have I not had my brain seared, my heart riven,
Hopes sapped, name blighted, Life's life lied away?
And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such clay
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey?

"From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy,
Have I not seen what human things could do?
From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the as paltry few,
And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would *seem* true,
And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

"But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;
But there is that within me which shall tire
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
Something unearthly, which they deem not of,
Like the remembered tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their softened spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love."

This passionateness of Byron's nature is, as we have already observed, manifested in all his writings. But it is sometimes softened into delicacy and tenderness, and becomes remarkably pure and sweet in its flow. The passages of thoughtful beauty which are scattered over his stormy and impulsive poems,—following, as they so often do, fierce bursts of passion, and the bad idolatry of hatred and despair,—are as pleasing to the eye as starlight after lightning. It is hardly necessary to enlarge on the fineness of his feeling for the beautiful, and the fertility of his imagination in images shaping it to the eye, and in tones suggesting it to the ear. A large number of his imaginations have become the language of the emotions they consecrate, and many are fast passing into the common speech of Englishmen. In the third and fourth cantos of "Childe Harold," in "Don Juan," in the narratives and meditations which he has cast in a dramatic form, passages might be selected of most witching loveliness, of deep pathos, of sad and mournful beauty of sentiment, of

aspiration after truth and goodness,—of pity, and charity, and faith, and humanity, and love. These display "how hard it is for a noble spirit to divorce itself wholly from what is good."

From among many illustrations of this softness and beauty of feeling, we select the following sonnet:

"Thy cheek is pale with thought, but not from woe;
And yet so lovely, that, if Mirth could flush
Its rose of whiteness with the brighest blush,
My heart would wish away that ruder glow:
And dazzle not thy deep-blue eyes—but, O,
While gazing on them, sterner eyes will gush,
And into mine my mother's weakness rush,
Soft as the last drops round heaven's airy bow.
For, through thy long dark lashes low depending,
The soul of melancholy Gentleness
Gleams like a seraph from the sky descending,
Above all pain, yet pitying all distress;
At once such majesty with sweetness blending,
I worship more, but cannot love thee less."

It is very difficult to connect the scattered characteristics of Byron's genius, so as to give a distinct notion of his personal character. Most certainly he was not a great man in action. He had no calm, self-sustaining energy of nature, few consistent opinions, little breadth of understanding. Irresolution, weakness, a reckless indifference to the consequences of his actions, a kind of settled feeling that he must yield to every impulse of his sensibility, a remarkable absence of any thing like a reference of his conduct to moral laws,—these absolutely stare us in the face, as we read his letters and journals. As regards reason, his whole strength lay in his insight; and his momentary glimpses of truth were sometimes peculiarly vivid and clear. In his speculations, or rather declarations, on subjects disconnected with poetry, we often discern many bright hints of truth; but he had not sufficient patience or comprehensiveness to follow them to their results, or to bind them together in logical order. As regards strength

of character, his force consisted in passion, not in principle. No vicious man ever lashed vice in others with more power. Not an inconsiderable portion of his writings, both in prose and verse, represents him as the critic of his contemporaries, and the censor and satirist of his age. When we read some of his fierce attacks on George the Fourth,

"The fourth of the fools and cowards, called George,"

and the bitterness of invective with which he treated the sins of other prominent culprits, we are ready to exclaim, with Sir Thomas Browne, "While thou so hotly disclaimest against the devil, be not guilty of diabolism." Again, no man volunteered his opinions with more freedom on literature, theology, politics, and society; but it is difficult to make any discrimination between his opinions and his antipathies, or to discover any law of change which regulated the passage of his antipathies into his loves. His taste was capricious in the extreme. His opinion of any person, or any institution, or any aspiration, varied with the physical variations of his body, and was often very different after a debauch from what it was after a ride. No one could infer his judgment of to-morrow from his judgment of to-day. The friend that appeared in the eulogy of one week was likely to point the squib of the next. His consistency in criticism was according to his constancy in hatred. Wordsworth and Southey he always disliked and always abused. As a critic, he has propounded some of the most untenable opinions ever uttered by a man of genius. He often mistook his whims and antipathies for laws of taste. When Keats's poems appeared, he entreats Murray to get some one to crush the little mannikin to pieces. After the article in the Quarterly was published, and the death of Keats was supposed to have been accelerated by its brutality, he abuses Murray for killing him, and discovers that there was much merit in the "mannikin's" poetry. It would be easy to multiply examples of this instability and levity of character;

but for any reader of his letters and journals, such instances would be needless.

The personal and poetical popularity of Byron is still great. The circulation of his works, even at the present time, exceeds that of Wordsworth, Shelley, Southey, and Coleridge united. Scott is the only poet, among his contemporaries, who at all rivals him in the number of readers. Many of his gloomy creations will long frown defiance upon time. It is certainly a calamity to the world, that a poet possessing such wide influence over the heart should too often have exercised it in cultivating and honoring its base and moody passions; should have robed sin in beauty, and conferred dignity on vice; should have given new allurements to that Dead-sea fruit,

> "Which tempts the eye,
> But turns to ashes on the lip;"

should have shown such brilliant audacity in assaults on the dearest interests of society; and, by the force of his example and the splendor of his mind, should be able to perpetuate his errors and his vices through many generations to come. It is of importance, not only to morals, but to taste, that there should be no delusion as to the nature of these perversions of his genius; that his wit should not shield his ribaldry from condemnation, nor his imagination be received in extenuation of his blasphemy. In speaking of Byron, as in speaking of men of meaner minds, things should be called by their right names. The method too apt to be pursued towards him is to gloss over his faults with some smooth sentimentalities about his temptations; or to speak of them with a singular relaxation of the rigidity of moral laws. But it seems to us impossible to defend his character, even as we defend the character of many men of genius, whose lives labor under some bad imputations. As soon as sophistry has dexterously disposed of one charge, a thousand others crowd up to be answered. He has written his own condemnation. The

faults of his life blaze out in his verse, and glitter on almost every page of his correspondence. And the most that charity itself can do is to repeat the mournful regret of the good abbot over the sins of Manfred :-

> "This should have been a noble creature: he
> Hath all the energy which would have made
> A goodly frame of glorious elements,
> Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
> It is an awful chaos—light and darkness—
> And mind and dust—and passions and pure thoughts,
> Mixed, and contending without end or order,
> All dormant or destructive."

GOETHE.*

Nemo contra deum nisi deus ipse.

Wer Großes will muß ſich zuſammen raffen;
In der Beſchränkung zeigt ſich erſt der Meiſter,
Und der Geſetz nur kann uns Freiheit geben.

THE first of these mottos is that prefixed by Goethe to the last books of "Dichtung und Wahrheit." These books record the hour of turning tide in his life, the time when he was called on for a choice at the "Parting of the Ways." From these months, which gave the sum of his youth, the crisis of his manhood, date the birth of Egmont, and of Faust too, though the latter was not published so early. They saw the rise and decline of his love for Lili, apparently the truest love he ever knew. That he was not himself dissatisfied with the results to which the decisions of this era led him, we may infer from his choice of a motto, and from the calm beauty with which he has invested the record.

The Parting of the Ways! The way he took led to court favour, wealth, celebrity, and an independence of celebrity. It led to large performance, and a wonderful economical management of intellect. Itled Faust the Seeker from the

* This Article is extracted from "the Dial," Vol. II., No. I. See Preface.—ED.

heights of his own mind to the trodden ways of the world. There, indeed, he did not lose sight of the mountains, but he never breathed their keen air again.

After this period we find in him rather a wide and deep Wisdom, than the inspirations of Genius. His faith, that all *must* issue well, wants the sweetness of piety; and the God he manifests to us is one of law or necessity, rather than of intelligent love. As this God makes because he must, so Goethe, his instrument, observes and recreates because he must; observing with minutest fidelity the outward exposition of nature, never blinded by a sham, or detained by a fear, he yet makes us feel that he wants insight to her sacred secret. The calmest of writers does not give us repose, because it is too difficult to find his centre. Those flame-like natures which he undervalues, give us more peace and hope through their restless aspirations, than he with his hearth-enclosed fires of steady fulfilment. For, true as it is, that God is everywhere, we must not only see him, but see him acknowledged. Through the consciousness of man "shall not Nature interpret God?" We wander in diversity, and, with each new turning of the path, long anew to be referred to the One.

Of Goethe, as of other natures, where the intellect is too much developed in proportion to the moral nature, it is difficult to speak without seeming narrow, blind, and impertinent. For such men *see* all that others *live*, and, if you feel a want of a faculty in them, it is hard to say they have it not, lest next moment they puzzle you by giving some indication of it. Yet they are not, nay *know* not; they only discern. The difference is that between sight and life, prescience and being, wisdom and love. Thus with Goethe. Naturally of a deep mind and shallow heart, he felt the sway of the affections enough to appreciate their working in other men, but never enough to receive their inmost regenerating influence.

How this might have been, had he ever once abandoned

himself entirely to a sentiment, it is impossible to say. But the education of his youth seconded, rather than balanced his natural tendency. His father was a gentlemanly Martinet; dull, sour, well-informed, and of great ambition as to externals. His influence on the son was wholly artificial. He was always turning this powerful mind from side to side in search of information, for the attainment of what are called accomplishments. The mother was a delightful person in her way; open, genial, playful, full of lively talent, but without earnestness of soul. She was one of those charming, but not noble persons, who take the day and the man as they find them, seeing the best that is there already, but never making the better grow there. His sister, though of graver kind, was social and intellectual, not religious or tender. The mortifying repulse of his early love checked the few pale buds of faith and tenderness that his heart put forth. His friends were friends of the intellect merely;—altogether he seemed led by destiny to the place he was to fill.

Pardon him, World, that he was too worldly. Do not wonder, Heart, that he was so heartless. Believe, Soul, that one so true, as far as he went, must yet be initiated into the deeper mysteries of Soul. Perhaps even now he sees that we must accept limitations, only to transcend them; work in processes, only to detect the organizing power which supersedes them; and that Sphynxes of fifty-five volumes might well be cast into the abyss before the single word that solves them all.

Now when I think of Goethe, I seem to see his soul,—all the variegated plumes of knowledge, artistic form "und so weiter" burnt from it by the fires of divine love, wingless, motionless, unable to hide from itself in any subterfuge of labor, saying again and again the simple words which he would never directly say on earth—God beyond Nature—Faith beyond Sight—the Seeker nobler than the Meister.

For this mastery that Goethe prizes seems to consist rather

in the skilful use of means than in the clear manifestation of ends. His Master, indeed, makes acknowledgment of a divine order, but the temporal uses are always uppermost in the mind of the reader. But of this more at large in reference to his works.

Apart from this want felt in his works, there is a littleness in his aspect as a character. Why waste his time in Weimar court entertainments? His duties as minister were not unworthy of him, though it would have been, perhaps, finer, if he had not spent so large a portion of that prime of intellectual life, from five and twenty to forty upon them.

But granted that the exercise these gave his faculties, the various lore they brought, and the good they did to the community made them worth his doing,—why that perpetual dangling after the royal family, why all that verse-making for the albums of serene highnesses, and those pretty poetical entertainments for the young princesses, and that cold setting himself apart from his true peers, the real sovereigns of Weimar, Herder, Wieland, and the others? The excuse must be found in circumstances of his time and temperament, which made the character of man of the world and man of affairs more attractive to him than the children of nature can conceive it to be in the eyes of one who is capable of being a consecrated bard.

The man of genius feels that literature has become too much a craft by itself. No man should live by or for his pen. Writing is worthless except as the record of life; and no great man ever was satisfied thus to express all his being. His book should be only an indication of himself. The obelisk should point to a scene of conquest. In the present state of division of labor, the literary man finds himself condemned to be nothing else. Does he write a good book; it is not received as evidence of his ability to live and act, but rather the reverse. Men do not offer him the care of embassies, as an earlier age did to Petrarca; they would be surprised if he

left his study to go forth to battle like Cervantes. We have the swordsman, and statesman, and penman, but it is not considered that the same mind which can rule the destiny of a poem, may as well that of an army or an empire.* Yet surely it should be so. The scientific man may need seclusion from the common affairs of life, for he has his materials before him; but the man of letters must seek them in life, and he who cannot act will but imperfectly appreciate action.

The literary man is impatient of being set apart. He feels that monks and troubadours, though in a similar position, were brought into more healthy connexion with man and nature, than he who is supposed to look at them merely to write them down. So he rebels; and Sir Walter Scott is prouder of being a good sheriff and farmer, than of his reputation as the Great Unknown. Byron piques himself on his skill in shooting and swimming. Sir H. Davy and Schlegel would be admired as dandies; and Goethe, who had received an order from a publisher "for a dozen more dramas in the same style as Goetz von Berlichingen," and though (in sadder sooth) he had already Faust in his head asking to be written out, thought it no degradation to become premier in the little duchy of Weimar.

Straws show which way the wind blows, and a comment may be drawn from the popular novels, where the literary man is obliged to wash off the ink in a violet bath, attest his courage in the duel, and hide his idealism beneath the vulgar nonchalance and coxcombry of the man of fashion.

If this tendency of his time had some influence in making Goethe find pleasure in tangible power and decided relations with society, there were other causes which worked deeper. The growth of genius in its relations to men around must always be attended with daily pain. The enchanted eye turns from the far-off star it has detected to the short-sighted

* Except in "La belle France."

bystander, and the seer is mocked for pretending to see what others cannot. The large and generalizing mind infers the whole from a single circumstance, and is reproved by all around for its presumptuous judgment. Its Ithuriel temper pierces shams, creeds, covenants, and chases the phantoms which others embrace, till the lovers of the false Florimels hurl the true knight to the ground. Little men are indignant that Hercules, yet an infant, declares he has strangled the snake; they demand a proof, they send him out into scenes of labor to bring hence the voucher that his father is a God. What the ancients meant to express by Apollo's continual disappointment in his loves, is felt daily in the youth of genius. The sympathy he seeks flies his touch, the objects of his affection jeer at his sublime credulity, his self-reliance is arrogance, his far sight infatuation, and his ready detection of fallacy fickleness and inconsistency. Such is the youth of genius, before the soul has given that sign of itself which an unbelieving generation cannot controvert. Even then he is little benefited by the transformation of the mockers into Dalai-Lama worshippers. For the soul seeks not adorers but peers, not blind worship but intelligent sympathy. The best consolation even then is that which Goethe puts into the mouth of Tasso: "To me gave a God to tell what I suffer." In Tasso Goethe has described the position of the poetical mind in its prose relations with equal depth and fulness. We see what he felt must be the result of entire abandonment to the highest nature. We see why he valued himself on being able to understand the Alphonsos, and meet as an equal the Antonios of every-day life.

But, you say, there is no likeness between Goethe and Tasso. Never believe it; such pictures are not painted from observation merely. That deep coloring which fills them with light and life is given by dipping the brush in one's own life-blood. Goethe had not from nature that character of self-reliance and self-control in which he so long appeared to the

world. It was wholly acquired and so highly valued because he was conscious of the opposite tendency. He was by nature as impetuous, though not as tender as Tasso; and the disadvantage at which this constantly placed him was keenly felt by a mind made to appreciate the subtlest harmonies in all relations. Therefore was it that, when he at last cast anchor, he was so reluctant again to trust himself to wave and breeze.

I have before spoken of the antagonist influences under which he was educated. He was driven from the severity of study into the world, and then again drawn back many times in the course of his crowded youth. Both the world and the study he used with unceasing ardor, but not with the sweetness of a peaceful hope. Most of the traits which are considered to mark his character at a later period were wanting to him in youth. He was very social, and continually perturbed by his social sympathies. He was deficient both in outward self-possession and mental self-trust. "I was always," he says, "either *too volatile or too infatuated*, so that those who looked kindly on me did by no means always honor me with their esteem." He wrote much and with great freedom; the pen came naturally to his hand, but he had no confidence in the merit of what he wrote, and much inferior persons to Merck and Herder might have induced him to throw aside as worthless what it had given him sincere pleasure to compose. It was hard for him to isolate himself, to console himself; and, though his mind was always busy with important thoughts, they did not free him from the pressure of other minds. His youth was as sympathetic and impetuous as any on record.

The effect of all this outward pressure on the poet is recorded in Werther, a production that he afterwards undervalued, and to which he even felt positive aversion. It was natural that this should be. In the calm air of the cultivated plain he attained, the remembrance of the miasma of sentimentality was odious to him. Yet sentimentality is but senti-

ment diseased, which to be cured must be patiently observed by the wise physician; so are the morbid desire and despair of Werther the sickness of a soul aspiring to a purer, freer state, but mistaking the way.

The best or the worst occasion in man's life is precisely that misused in Werther, when he longs for more love, more freedom, and a larger development of genius than the limitations of this terrene sphere permit. Sad is it indeed if, persisting to grasp too much at once, he lose all as Werther did. He must accept limitation, must consent to do his work in time, must let his affections be baffled by the barriers of convention. Tantalus like, he makes this world a Tartarus, or like Hercules, rises in fires to heaven, according as he knows how to interpret his lot. But he must only use, not adopt it. The boundaries of the man must never be confounded with the destiny of the soul. If he does not decline his destiny as Werther did, it is his honor to have felt its unfitness for his eternal scope. He was born for wings, he is held to walk in leading strings; nothing lower than faith must make him resigned, and only in hope should he find content, a hope not of some slight improvement in his own condition or that of other men, but a hope justified by the divine justice, which is bound in due time to satisfy every want of his nature.

Schiller's great command is, "Keep true to the dream of thy youth." The great problem is how to make the dream real, through the exercise of the waking will.

This was not exactly the problem Goethe tried to solve. To *do* somewhat became too important, as is indicated both by the second motto to this essay and by his maxim, "It is not the knowledge of what *might be*, but what *is*, that forms us."

Werther, like his early essays now republished from the Frankfort Journal, is characterized by a fervid eloquence of Italian glow, which betrays a part of his character almost lost

sight of in the quiet transparency of his later productions, and may give us some idea of the mental conflicts through which he passed to manhood.

Exceedingly characteristic of his genius is a little tale, which he records as having frequently been told by him to his companions, when only eight or nine years of age.*

The acting out the mystery into life, the calmness of survey, and the passionateness of feeling, above all the ironical baffling at the end, and want of point to a tale got up with such an eye to effect as he goes along, mark well the man that was to be. Even so did he demand in Werther, even so resolutely open the door in the first part of Faust, even so seem to play with himself and his contemporaries in the second part of Faust and Wilhelm Meister.

Yet was he deeply earnest in his play, not for men, but for himself. To himself as a part of nature it was important to grow, to lift his head to the light. In nature, he had all confidence; for man, as a part of nature, infinite hope; but in him as an individual will, seemingly not much trust, at the earliest age.

The history of his intimacies marks his course; they were entered into with passionate eagerness; but always ended in an observation of the intellect, and he left them on his road as the snake leaves his skin. The first man he met of force sufficient to command a large share of his attention was Herder, and the benefit of this intercourse was critical, not genial. Of the good Lavater he soon perceived the weakness. Merck, again, commanded his respect, but the force of Merck also was cold.

But in the Grand Duke of Weimar he seems to have met a character strong enough to exercise a decisive influence upon his own. Goethe was not so politic and worldly, that

* This Tale, which is inserted in the Article as it appears in "The Dial," is omitted here, as it possesses little or no intrinsic merit, and would occupy too much space.—Ed.

a little man could ever have become his Mæcenas. In the Duchess Amelia and her son he found that practical sagacity, large knowledge of things as they are, active force, and genial feeling, which he had never before seen combined.

The wise mind of the Duchess gave the first impulse to the noble course of Weimar. But that her son should have availed himself of the foundation she laid is praise enough, in a world where there is such a rebound from parental influence, that it generally seems that the child makes use of the directions given by the parent only to avoid the prescribed path. The Duke availed himself of guidance, though with a perfect independence in action. The Duchess had the unusual wisdom to know the right time for giving up the reins, and thus maintained her authority as far as the weight of her character was calculated to give it.

Of her Goethe was thinking when he wrote, "The admirable woman is she, who, if the husband dies, can be a father to the children."

The Duke seems to have been one of those characters, which are best known by the impression their personal presence makes on us, resembling an elemental and pervasive force, rather than wearing the features of an individuality. Goethe describes him as "Dämonische," that is, gifted with an instinctive, spontaneous force, which at once, without calculation or foresight, chooses the right means to an end. As these beings do not calculate, so is their influence incalculable. Their repose has as much influence over other beings as their action, even as the thunder-cloud, lying black and distant in the summer sky, is not less imposing than when it bursts and gives forth its quick lightnings. Such men were Mirabeau and Swift. They had also distinct talents, but their influence was from a perception in the minds of men of this spontaneous energy in their natures. Sometimes, though rarely, we see such a man in an obscure position; circumstances have not led him to a large sphere; he may not have expressed in

words a single thought worth recording; but by his eye and voice he rules all around him.

He stands upon his feet with a firmness and calm security, which make other men seem to halt and totter in their gait. In his deep eye is seen an infinite comprehension, an infinite reserve of power. No accent of his sonorous voice is lost on any ear within hearing; and, when he speaks, men hate or fear perhaps the disturbing power they feel, but never dream of disobeying.

But hear Goethe himself.

"The boy believed in nature, in the animate and inanimate, the intelligent and unconscious to discover somewhat which manifested itself only through contradiction, and therefore could not be comprehended by any conception, much less defined by a word. It was not divine, for it seemed without reason; not human, because without understanding; not devilish, because it worked to good; not angelic, because it often betrayed a petulant love of mischief. It was like chance, in that it proved no sequence; it suggested the thought of Providence, because it indicated connexion. To this all our limitations seem penetrable; it seemed to play at will with all the elements of our being: it compressed time and dilated space. Only in the impossible did it seem to delight, and to cast the possible aside with disdain.

"This existence which seemed to mingle with others, sometimes to separate, sometimes to unite, I called the Dämonische, after the example of the ancients, and others who have observed somewhat similar."—*Dichtung und Wahreit.*

"The Dämonische is that which cannot be explained by reason or understanding; it lies not in my nature, but I am subject to it.

"Napoleon was a being of this class, and in so high a degree, that scarce any one is to be compared with him. Also our late Grand Duke was such a nature, full of unlimited power of action and unrest, so that his own dominion was too little for him, and the greatest would have been too little. Demoniac beings of this sort the Greeks reckoned among their demi-gods."—*Conversations with Eckermann.*

This great force of will, this instinctive directness of action, gave the Duke an immediate ascendancy over Goethe, which no other person had ever possessed. It was by no

means mere sycophancy that made him give up, the next ten years, the prime of his manhood, to accompanying the Grand Duke in his revels, or aiding him in his schemes of practical utility, or to contriving elegant amusements for the ladies of the court. It was a real admiration for the character of the genial man of the world and its environment.

Whoever is turned from his natural path may, if he will, gain in largeness and depth what he loses in simple beauty; and so it was with Goethe. Faust became a wiser if not a nobler being. Werther, who must die because life was not wide enough and rich enough in love for him, ends as the Meister of the Wanderjahre, well content to be one never inadequate to the occasion, "help-full, comfort-full."

A great change was during these years perceptible to his friends in the character of Goethe. From being always "either too volatile or infatuated," he retreated into a self-collected state, which seemed at first even icy to those around him. No longer he darted about him the lightnings of his genius, but sat Jove-like and calm, with the thunderbolts grasped in his hand, and the eagle gathered to his feet. His freakish wit was subdued into a calm and even cold irony, his multiplied relations no longer permitted him to abandon himself to any, the minister and courtier could not expatiate in the free regions of invention, and bring upon paper the signs of his higher life, without subjecting himself to an artificial process of isolation. Obliged to economy of time and means, he made of his intimates not objects of devout tenderness, of disinterested care, but the crammers and feeders of his intellect. The world was to him an arena or a studio, but not a temple.

"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

Had Goethe entered upon practical life from the *dictate* of his spirit, which bade him not be a mere author, but a living, loving man, that had all been well. But he must also be a

man of the world, and nothing can be more unfavorable to true manhood than this ambition. The citizen, the hero, the general, the poet, all these are in true relations; but what is called being a man of the world is to truckle to it, not truly serve it.

Thus fettered in false relations, detained from retirement upon the centre of his being, yet so relieved from the early pressure of his great thoughts as to pity more pious souls for being restless seekers, no wonder that he wrote—

"Es ist dafür gesorgt dass die Bäume nicht in den Himmel wachsen"

Care is taken that the trees grow not up into the heavens.

Ay, Goethe, but in proportion to their force of aspiration is their height!

Yet never let him be confounded with those who sell all their birthright. He became blind to the more generous virtues, the nobler impulses, but ever in self-respect was busy to develope his nature. He was kind, industrious, wise, gentlemanly, if not manly. If his genius lost sight of the highest aim, he is the best instructor in the use of means; ceasing to be a prophet poet, he was still a poetic artist. From this time forward he seems a listener to nature, but not himself the highest product of nature, a priest to the soul of nature. His works grow out of life, but are not instinct with the peculiar life of human resolve, as Shakspeare's or Dante's is.

Faust contains the great idea of his life, as indeed there is but one great poetic idea possible to man, the progress of a soul through the various forms of existence. All his other works, whatever their miraculous beauty of execution, are mere chapters to this poem, illustrative of particular points. Faust, had it been completed in the spirit in which it was begun, would have been the Divina Commedia of its age.

But nothing can better show the difference of result

between a stern and earnest life, and one of partial accommodation, than a comparison between the Paradiso and that of the second part of Faust. In both a soul, gradually educated and led back to God, is received at last not through merit, but grace. But O the difference between the grandly humble reliance of old Catholicism, and the loop-hole redemption of modern sagacity. Dante was a *man*, of vehement passions, many prejudices, bitter as much as sweet. His knowledge was scanty, his sphere of observation narrow, the objects of his active life petty, compared with those of Goethe. But, constantly retiring on his deepest self, clear-sighted to the limitations of man, but no less so to the illimitable energy of the soul, the sharpest details in his work convey a largest sense, as his strongest and steadiest flights only direct the eye to heavens yet beyond.

Yet perhaps he had not so hard a battle to wage as this other great Poet. The fiercest passions are not so dangerous foes to the soul as the cold skepticism of the understanding. The Jewish demon assailed the man of Uz with physical ills, the Lucifer of the middle ages tempted his passions; but the Mephistopheles of the eighteenth century bade the finite strive to compass the infinite, and the intellect attempt to solve all the problems of the soul.

This path Faust had taken: it is that of modern necromancy. Not willing to grow into God by the steady worship of a life, man would enforce his presence by a spell; not willing to learn his existence by the slow processes of their own, they strive to bind it in a word, that they may wear it about the neck as a talisman.

Faust, bent upon reaching the centre of the universe through the intellect alone, naturally, after a length of trial, which has prevented the harmonious unfolding of his nature, falls into despair. He has striven for one object, and that object eludes him. Returning upon himself, he finds large tracts of his nature lying waste and cheerless. He is too

noble for apathy, too wise for vulgar content with the animal enjoyments of life. Yet the thirst he has been so many years increasing is not to be borne. Give me, he cries, but a drop of water to cool my burning tongue. Yet, in casting himself with a wild recklessness upon the impulses of his nature yet untried, there is a disbelief that anything short of the All can satisfy the immortal spirit. His first attempt was noble, though mistaken; and under the saving influence of it, he makes the compact, whose condition cheats the fiend at last.

Kannst du mich schmeichelnd je belügen
Dass ich mir selbst gefallen mag,
Kannst du mich mit Genüss betrügen:
Das sei für mich der letzte Tag.

Werd ich zum Augenblicke sagen:
Verweile doch! du bist so schön!
Dann magst du mich in Fesseln schlagen,
Dann will ich gern zu Grunde gehen.

Canst thou by falsehood or by flattery
Make me one moment with myself at peace,
Cheat me into tranquillity? Come then
And welcome life's last day.
Make me but to the moment say,
Oh fly not yet, thou art so fair,
Then let me perish, &c.

But this condition is never fulfilled. Faust cannot be content with sensuality, with the charlatanry of ambition, nor with riches. His heart never becomes callous, nor his moral and intellectual perceptions obtuse. He is saved at last.

With the progress of an individual soul is shadowed forth that of the soul of the age, beginning in intellectual skepticism, sinking into license, cheating itself with dreams of perfect bliss, to be at once attained by means no surer than a spurious paper currency, longing itself back from conflict between the spirit and the flesh, induced by Christianity, to the Greek era with its harmonious development of body and

mind, striving to reëmbody the loved phantom of classical beauty in the heroism of the middle age, flying from the Byron despair of those, who die because they cannot soar without wings to schemes, however narrow, of practical utility,—redeemed at last through mercy alone.

The second part of Faust is full of meaning, resplendent with beauty; but it is rather an appendix to the first part than a fulfilment of its promise. The world, remembering the powerful stamp of individual feeling, universal indeed in its application, but individual in its life, which had conquered all its scruples in the first part, was vexed to find, instead of the man Faust, the spirit of the age,—discontented with the shadowy manifestation of truths it longed to embrace, and, above all, disappointed that the author no longer met us face to face, or riveted the ear by his deep tones of grief and resolve.

When the world shall have got rid of the still overpowering influence of the first part, it will be seen that the fundamental idea is never lost sight of in the second. The change is that Goethe, though the same thinker, is no longer the same person.

The continuation of Faust in the practical sense of the education of a man is to be found in Wilhelm Meister. Here we see the change by strongest contrast. The mainspring of action is no longer the impassioned and noble Seeker, but a disciple of Circumstance, whose most marked characteristic is a *taste* for virtue and knowledge. Wilhelm certainly prefers these conditions of existence to their opposites, but there is nothing so decided in his character as to prevent his turning a clear eye on every part of that variegated world-scene, which the writer wished to place before us.

To see all till he knows all sufficiently to put objects into their relations, then to concentrate his powers and use his knowledge under recognised conditions, such is the progress of man from Apprentice to Master.

'Tis pity that the volumes of the "Wanderjahre" have not been translated entire, as well as those of the "Lehrjahre," for many, who have read the latter only, fancy that Wilhelm becomes a Master in that work. Far from it, he has but just become conscious of the higher powers that have ceaselessly been weaving his fate. Far from being as yet a Master, he but now begins to be a Knower. In the "Wanderjahre" we find him gradually learning the duties of citizenship, and hardening into manhood, by applying what he has learnt for himself to the education of his child. He converses on equal terms with the wise and beneficent, he is no longer duped and played with for his good, but met directly mind to mind.

Wilhelm is a Master when he can command his actions, yet keep his mind always open to new means of knowledge. When he has looked at various ways of living, various forms of religion and of character, till he has learned to be tolerant of all, discerning of good in all. When the Astronomer imparts to his equal ear his highest thoughts, and the poor cottager seeks his aid as a patron and counsellor.

To be capable of all duties, limited by none, with an open eye, a skilful and ready hand, an assured step, a mind deep, calm, foreseeing without anxiety, hopeful without the aid of illusion, such is the ripe state of manhood. This attained, the great soul should still seek and labor, but strive and battle never more.

The reason for Goethe's choosing so negative a character as Wilhelm, and leading him through scenes of vulgarity and low vice, would be obvious enough to a person of any depth of thought, even if he himself had not announced it. He thus obtained room to paint life as it really is, and bring forward those slides in the magic lantern which are always known to exist, though they may not be spoken of to ears polite.

Wilhelm cannot abide in tradition, nor do as his fathers did before him, merely for the sake of money or a standing

in society. The stage, here an emblem of the ideal life as it gleams before unpractised eyes, offers, he fancies, opportunity for a life of thought as distinguished from one of routine. Here, no longer the simple citizen, but Man, all Men, he will rightly take upon himself the different aspects of life, till poet-wise, he shall have learnt them all.

No doubt the attraction of the stage to young persons of a vulgar character is merely the brilliancy of its trappings; but to Wilhelm, as to Goethe, it was this poetic freedom and daily suggestion, which seemed likely to offer such an agreeable studio in the green-room.

But the ideal must be rooted in the real, else the poet's life degenerates into buffoonery or vice. Wilhelm finds the characters formed by this would-be ideal existence more despicable than those which grew up on the track, dusty and bustling and dull as it had seemed, of common life. He is prepared by disappointment for a higher ambition.

In the house of the Count he finds genuine elegance, genuine sentiment, but not sustained by wisdom, or a devotion to important objects. This love, this life is also inadequate.

Now with Teresa, he sees the blessings of domestic peace. He sees a mind sufficient for itself, finding employment and education in the perfect economy of a little world. The lesson is pertinent to the state of mind in which his former experiences have left him, as indeed our deepest lore is won from reaction. But a sudden change of scene introduces him to the society of the sage and learned Uncle, the sage and beneficent Natalia. Here he finds the same virtues as with Teresa, and enlightened by a larger wisdom.

A friend of mine says, that his ideal of a friend is a worthy Aunt, one who has the tenderness without the blindness of a mother, and takes the same charge of the child's mind, as the mother of its body. I don't know but this may have a foundation in truth; though, if so, Auntism, like other grand

professions, has sadly degenerated. At any rate, Goethe seems to be possessed with a similar feeling. The Count de Thorane, a man of powerful character, who made a deep impression on his childhood, was, he says, "reverenced by me as an Uncle." And the ideal wise man of this common-life epic stands before us as "The Uncle."

After seeing the working of just views in the establishment of the Uncle, learning piety from the Confessions of a Beautiful Soul, and religious beneficence from the beautiful life of Natalia, Wilhelm is deemed worthy of admission to the society of the Illuminati, that is, those who have pierced the secret of life, and know what it is to be and to do.

Here he finds the scroll of his life "drawn with large, sharp strokes," that is, these truly wise read his character for him, and "mind and destiny are but two names for one idea."

He now knows enough to enter on the Wanderjahre.

Goethe always represents the highest principle in the feminine form. Woman is the Minerva, man the Mars. As in the Faust, the purity of Gretchen, resisting the demon always, even after all her faults, is announced to have saved her soul to heaven; and in the second part she appears, not only redeemed herself, but by her innocence and forgiving tenderness hallowed to redeem the being who had injured her.

So in the Meister, these women hover around the narrative, each embodying the spirit of the scene. The frail Philina, graceful though contemptible, represents the degradation incident to an attempt at leading an exclusively poetic life. Mignon, gift divine as ever the Muse bestowed on the passionate heart of Man, with her soft mysterious inspiration, her pining for perpetual youth, represents the high desire that leads to this mistake, as Aurelia the desire for excitement; Teresa, practical wisdom, gentle tranquillity, which seem most desirable after the Aurelia glare. Of the beau-

tiful soul and Natalia, we have already spoken. The former embodies what was suggested to Goethe by the most spiritual person he knew in youth, Mademoiselle von Klettenberg, over whom, as he said, in her invalid loneliness the Holy Ghost brooded like a dove.

Entering on the Wanderjahre, Wilhelm becomes acquainted with another woman, who seems the complement of all the former, and represents the idea which is to guide and mould him in the realization of all the past experience.

This person, long before we see her, is announced in various ways as a ruling power. She is the last hope in cases of difficulty, and, though an invalid, and living in absolute retirement, is consulted by her connexions and acquaintance as an unerring judge in all their affairs.

All things tend towards her as a centre; she knows all, governs all, but never goes forth from herself.

Wilhelm at last visits her. He finds her infirm in body, but equal to all she has to do. Charity and counsel to men who need her are her business; astronomy her pleasure.

After a while, Wilhelm ascertains from the Astronomer, her companion, what he had before suspected, that she really belongs to the solar system, and only appears on earth to give men a feeling of the planetary harmony. From her youth up, says the Astronomer, till she knew me, though all recognized in her an unfolding of the highest moral and intellectual qualities, she was supposed to be sick at her times of clear vision. When her thoughts were not in the heavens, she returned and acted in obedience to them on earth; she was then said to be well.

When the Astronomer had observed her long enough, he confirmed her inward consciousness of a separate existence and peculiar union with the heavenly bodies.

Her picture is painted with many delicate traits, and a gradual preparation leads the reader to acknowledge the truth, but, even in the slight indication here given, who does

not recognise thee, divine Philosophy, sure as the planetary orbits and inexhaustible as the fount of light, crowning the faithful Seeker at last with the privilege to possess his own soul.

In all that is said of Macaria,* we recognize that no thought is too religious for the mind of Goethe. It was indeed so; you can deny him nothing, but only feel that his works are not instinct and glowing with the central fire, and, after catching a glimpse of the highest truth, are forced again to find him too much afraid of losing sight of the limitations of nature to overflow you or himself with the creative spirit.

While the apparition of the celestial Macaria seems to announce the ultimate destiny of the soul of Man, the practical application of all Wilhelm has thus painfully acquired is not of pure Delphian strain. Goethe draws as he passes a dart from the quiver of Phœbus, but ends as Esculapius or Mercury. Wilhelm, at the school of the Three Reverences, thinks out what can be done for man in his temporal relations. He learns to practise moderation, and even painful renunciation. The book ends, simply indicating what the course of his life will be, by making him perform an act of kindness, with good judgment, and at the right moment.

Surely the simple soberness of Goethe should please at least those who style themselves, *par excellence*, people of common sense.

The following remarks are by the celebrated Rahel von Ense, whose discernment as to his works was highly prized by Goethe.

"Don Quixote and Wilhelm Meister!

"Embrace one another, Cervantes and Goethe!

"Both, using their own clear eyes, vindicated human nature. They

* The name of Macaria is one of noblest association. It is that of the daughter of Hercules, who devoted herself a voluntary sacrifice for her country. She was adored by the Greeks as the true Felicity.

saw the champions through their errors and follies, looking down into the deepest soul, seeing there the true form. The Don as well as Meister is called a fool by *respectable* people, wandering hither and thither, transacting no business of real life, bringing nothing to pass, scarce even knowing what he ought to think on any subject, very unfit for the hero of a romance. Yet has our Sage known how to paint the good and honest mind in perpetual toil and conflict with the world, as it is embodied, never sharing one moment the impure confusion, always striving to find fault with and improve itself, always so innocent as to see others for better than they are, and generally preferring them to himself, learning from all, indulging all, except the manifestly base; the more you understand, the more you respect and love this character.

"Cervantes has painted the knight, Goethe the culture of the entire man,—both their own time."

But those who demand from him a life-long continuance of the early ardor of Faust, who wish to see throughout his works, not only such manifold beauty and subtle wisdom, but the clear assurance of divinity, the pure white light of Macaria, wish that he had not so variously unfolded his nature, and concentred it more. They would see him slaying the serpent with the divine wrath of Apollo, rather than taming it to his service, like Esculapius. They wish that he had never gone to Weimar, had never become an universal connoisseur and dilettant in science, and courtier as "graceful as a born nobleman," but had borne the burden of life with the suffering crowd, and deepened his nature in loneliness and privation, till Faust had conquered, rather than cheated the devil, and the music of heavenly faith superseded the grave and mild eloquence of human wisdom.

The expansive genius which moved so gracefully in its self-imposed fetters, is constantly surprising us by its content with a choice low, in so far as it was not the highest of which the mind was capable. The secret may be found in the second motto of this slight essay.

"He who would do great things must quickly draw together his forces. The master can only show himself such through limitation, and the law alone can give us freedom."

But there is a higher spiritual law always ready to supersede the temporal laws at the call of the human soul. The soul that is too content with usual limitations will never call forth this unusual manifestation.

If there be a tide in the affairs of men, which must be taken at the right moment to lead on to fortune, it is the same with inward as with outward life. He, who in the crisis hour of youth has stopped short of himself, is not likely to find again what he has missed in one life, for there are a great number of blanks to a prize in each lottery.

But the pang we feel that "those who are so much are not more," seems to promise new spheres, new ages, new crises to enable these beings to complete their circle.

Perhaps Goethe is even now sensible that he should not have stopped at Weimar as his home, but made it one station on the way to Paradise; not stopped at humanity, but regarded it as symbolical of the divine, and given to others to feel more distinctly the centre of the universe, as well as the harmony in its parts. It is great to be an Artist, a Master, greater still to be a Seeker till the Man has found all himself.

What Goethe meant by self-collection was a collection of means for work, rather than to divine the deepest truths of being. Thus are these truths always indicated, never declared; and the religious hope awakened by his subtle discernment of the workings of nature never gratified, except through the intellect.

He whose prayer is only work will not leave his treasure in the secret shrine.

One is ashamed when finding any fault with one like Goethe, who is so great. It seems the only criticism should be to do all he omitted to do, and that none who cannot is entitled to say a word. Let one speak who was all Goethe was not; noble, true, virtuous, but neither wise nor subtle in his generation, a divine ministrant, a baffled man, ruled and

imposed on by the pigmies whom he spurned, a heroic artist, a democrat to the tune of Burns:

"The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that."

Hear Beethoven speak of Goethe on an occasion which brought out the two characters in strong contrast.

Extract from a letter of Beethoven to Bettina Brentano, Töplitz, 1812.

"Kings and Princes can indeed make Professors and Privy Councillors, and hang upon them titles; but great men they cannot make; souls that rise above the mud of the world, these they must let be made by other means than theirs, and should therefore show them respect. When two such as I and Goethe come together, then must great lords observe what is esteemed great by one of us. Coming home yesterday we met the whole Imperial family. We saw them coming, and Goethe left me and insisted on standing on one side; let me say what I would, I could not make him come on one step. I pressed my hat upon my head, buttoned my surtout, and passed on through the thickest crowd. Princes and parasites made way; the Arch-duke Rudolph took off his hat; the Empress greeted me first. Their Highnesses KNOW ME. I was well amused to see the crowd pass by Goethe. At the side stood he, hat in hand, low bowed in reverence till all had gone by. Then have I scolded him well. I gave no pardon, but reproached him with all his sins, most of all those towards you, dearest Bettina; we had just been talking of you."

If Beethoven appears, in this scene, somewhat arrogant and bearish, yet how noble his extreme compared with the opposite! Goethe's friendship with the Grand Duke we respect, for Karl-August was a strong man. But we regret to see at the command of any and all members of the ducal family, and their connexions, who had nothing but rank to recommend them, his time and thoughts, of which he was so chary to private friends. Beethoven could not endure to teach the Archduke Rudolph, who had the soul duly to revere his genius, because he felt it to be "hofdienst," court-service.

He received with perfect nonchalance the homage of the sovereigns of Europe. Only the Empress of Russia and the Archduke Karl, whom he esteemed as individuals, had power to gratify him by their attentions. Compare with Goethe's obsequious pleasure, at being able gracefully to compliment such high personages, Beethoven's conduct with regard to the famous Heroic Symphony. This was composed at the suggestion of Bernadotte, while Napoleon was still in his first glory. He was then the hero of Beethoven's imagination, who hoped from him the liberation of Europe. With delight the great artist expressed in his eternal harmonies the progress of the Hero's soul. The symphony was finished, and even dedicated to Buonaparte, when the news came of his declaring himself Emperor of the French. The first act of the indignant artist was to tear off his dedication and trample it under foot, nor could he endure again even the mention of Napoleon till the time of his fall.

Admit, that Goethe had a natural taste for the trappings of rank and wealth, from which the musician was quite free, yet we cannot doubt that both saw through these externals to man as a nature; there can be no doubt on whose side was the simple greatness, the noble truth. We pardon thee, Goethe,—but thee, Beethoven, we revere; for thou hast maintained the worship of the Manly, the Permanent, the True.

The clear perception which was in Goethe's better nature of the beauty of that steadfastness, of that singleness and simple melody of soul, which he too much sacrificed to become "the many-sided One," is shown most distinctly in his two surpassingly beautiful works, The Elective Affinities and Iphigenia.

Not Werther, not the Nouvelle Heloise, have been assailed with such a storm of indignation as the first named of these works, on the score of gross immorality.

The reason probably is the subject; any discussion of the

validity of the marriage vow making society tremble to its foundation; and secondly, the cold manner in which it is done. All that is in the book would be bearable to most minds, if the writer had had less the air of a spectator, and had larded his work here and there with ejaculations of horror and surprise.

These declarations of sentiment on the part of the author seem to be required by the majority of readers, in order to an interpretation of his purpose, as sixthly, seventhly, and eighthly were, in an old-fashioned sermon, to rouse the audience to a perception of the method made use of by the preacher.

But it has always seemed to me that those who need not such helps to their discriminating faculties, but read a work so thoroughly as to apprehend its whole scope and tendency, rather than hear what the author says it means, will regard the Elective Affinities as a work especially what is called moral in its outward effect, and religious even to piety in its spirit. The mental aberrations of the consorts from their plighted faith, though in the one case never indulged, and though in the other no veil of sophistry is cast over the weakness of passion, but all that is felt expressed with the openness of one who desires to legitimate what he feels, are punished by terrible griefs and a fatal catastrophe. Ottilia, that being of exquisite purity, with intellect and character so harmonized in feminine beauty, as they never before were found in any portrait of woman painted by the hand of man, perishes, on finding she has been breathed on by unhallowed passion, and led to err even by her ignorant wishes against what is held sacred. The only personage whom we do not pity is Edward, for he is the only one who stifles the voice of conscience.

There is indeed, a sadness, as of an irresistible fatality brooding over the whole. It seems as if only a ray of angelic truth could have enabled these men to walk wisely in

this twilight, at first so soft and alluring, then deepening into blind horror.

But if no such ray came to prevent their earthly errors, it seems to point heavenward in the saintly sweetness of Ottilia. Her nature, too fair for vice, too finely wrought even for error, comes lonely, intense, and pale, like the evening star on the cold wintry night. It tells of other worlds, where the meaning of such strange passages as this must be read to those faithful and pure like her, victims perishing in the green garlands of a spotless youth to atone for the unworthiness of others.

An unspeakable pathos is felt from the minutest trait of this character, and deepens with every new study of it. Not even in Shakspeare have I so felt the organizing power of genius. Through dead words I find the least gestures of this person, stamping themselves on my memory, betraying to the heart the secret of her life, which she herself, like all these divine beings, knew not. I feel myself familiarized with all beings of her order. I see not only what she was, but what she might have been, and live with her in yet untrodden realms.

Here is the glorious privilege of a form known only in the world of genius. There is on it no stain of usage or calculation to dull our sense of its immeasurable life. What in our daily walk, amid common faces and common places, fleets across us at moments from glances of the eye or tones of the voice, is felt from the whole being of one of these children of genius.

This precious gem is set in a ring complete in its enamel. I cannot hope to express my sense of the beauty of this book as a work of art. I would not attempt it, if I had elsewhere met any testimony to the same. The perfect picture always before the mind of the chateau, the moss hut, the park, the garden, the lake, with its boat and the landing beneath the platan trees; the gradual manner in which both localities

and persons grow upon us, more living than life, inasmuch as we are, unconsciously, kept at our best temperature by the atmosphere of genius, and thereby more delicate in our perceptions than amid our customary fogs; the gentle unfolding of the central thought, as a flower in the morning sun; then the conclusion, rising like a cloud, first soft and white, but darkening as it comes, till with a sudden wind it bursts above our heads; the ease with which we everywhere find points of view all different, yet all bearing on the same circle, for, though we feel every hour new worlds, still before our eye lie the same objects, new, yet the same, unchangeable, yet always changing their aspects as we proceed, till at last we find we ourselves have traversed the circle, and know all we overlooked at first.

For myself, I never felt so completely that very thing which genius should always make us feel, that I was in its circle, and could not get out till its spell was done, and its last spirit permitted to depart. I was not carried away, instructed, delighted more than by other works, but I was there, living there, whether as the platan tree, or the architect, or any other observing part of the scene. The personages live too intensely to let us live in them, they draw around themselves circles within the circle, we can only see them close, not be themselves.

Others, it would seem, on closing the book, exclaim, "what an immoral book!" I well remember my own thought: "It is a work of Art!" At last I understood that world within a world, that ripest fruit of human nature, which is called Art. With each perusal of the book my wonder and delight at this wonderful fulfilment of design grew. I understood why Goethe was well content to be called Artist, and his works, works of art, rather than revelations. At this moment, remembering what I then felt, I am inclined to class all my negations just written on this paper as stuff, and to look upon myself, for thinking

them, with as much contempt as Mr. Carlyle, or Mrs. Austin, or Mrs. Jameson might do, to say nothing of the German Goetheans.

Yet that they were not without foundation I feel again when I turn to the Iphigenia; a work beyond the possibility of negation; a work where a religious meaning not only pierces, but enfolds the whole; a work as admirable in art, still higher in significance, more single in expression.

There is an English translation (I know not how good) of Goethe's Iphigenia.* But as it may not be generally known, I will give a sketch of the drama. Iphigenia, saved at the moment of the sacrifice made by Agamemnon in behalf of the Greeks, by the goddess, and transferred to the temple at Tauris, appears alone in the consecrated grove. Many years have passed since she was severed from the home of such a tragic fate, the palace of Mycenæ. Troy had fallen, Agamemnon been murdered, Orestes had grown up to avenge his death. All these events were unknown to the exiled Iphigenia. The priestess of Diana in a barbarous land, she had

* Miss Swanwick's translation of this splendid drama deserves great praise. The thoughts and sentiments of the original have been transferred with great fidelity, and clothed in language which is throughout perspicuous, and almost always characterized by a dignified beauty of expression and harmonious rhythm. As it may be interesting to see the passages, which are translated in the text with only a regard to their literal correctness, in a more polished form, I shall here subjoin them, at the foot of each page, as translated by Miss Swanwick. In two or three instances there is greater strength and effect in the translation in the text than in the one here subjoined, which of course may be occasionally expected. I had at first designed to have substituted her version for the one which now stands in the text, but, out of deference to the author, I determined to preserve his essay in its original integrity.—Ed.

[This translation is published, together with Goethe's "Torquato Tasso," and Schiller's "Maid of Orleans" (omitting some passages), in one volume, entitled, "Selections from the Dramas of Goethe and Schiller, translated, with introductory remarks, by Anna Swanwick." London: Chapman, Brothers.]

passed the years in the duties of the sanctuary, and in acts of beneficence. She had acquired great power over the mind of Thoas, king of Tauris, and used it to protect strangers, whom it had previously been the custom of the country to sacrifice to the goddess.

She salutes us with a soliloquy, of which this is a rude translation.

* Beneath your shade, living summits
Of this ancient, holy, thick-leaved grove,
As in the silent sanctuary of the Goddess,
Still I walk with those same shuddering feelings
As when I trod these walks for the first time.
My spirit cannot accustom itself to these places,
Many years now has kept me here concealed
A higher will to which I am submissive;
Yet ever am I, as at first, the stranger;
For ah! the sea divides me from the beloved ones;
And on the shore whole days I stand,
Seeking with my soul the land of the Greeks,
And to my sighs brings the rushing wave only
Its hollow tones in answer.
Woe to him who, far from parents, and brothers, and sisters,
Drags on a lonely life. Grief consumes
The nearest happiness away from his lips;
His thoughts crowd downwards—

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* Beneath your leafy gloom, ye waving boughs
Of this old, shady, consecrated grove,
As in the goddess' silent sanctuary,
With the same shuddering feeling forth I step,
As when I trod it first, nor ever here
Doth my unquiet spirit feel at home.
Long as the mighty will, to which I bow,
Hath kept me here conceal'd, still, as at first,
I feel myself a stranger. For the sea
Doth sever me, alas! from those I love,
And day by day upon the shore I stand,
My soul still seeking for the land of Greece.
But to my sighs, the hollow sounding waves
Bring, save their own hoarse murmurs, no reply.
Alas for him! who friendless and alone,
Remote from parents and from brethren dwells;
Grief doth from him snatch every coming joy
Before it reach his lip. His restless thoughts
Revert for ever to his father's halls,
Where first to him the radiant sun unclosed

Seeking the hall of his fathers, where the Sun
First opened heaven to him, and kindred-born
In the first plays knit daily firmer and firmer
The bond from heart to heart.—I question not the Gods,
Only the lot of woman is one for sorrow;
In the house and in the war man rules,
Knows how to help himself in foreign lands,
Possessions gladden and victory crowns him,
And an honorable death stands ready to end his days.
Within what narrow limits is bounded the luck of woman!
To obey a rude husband even is duty and comfort;—how sad
When, instead, a hostile fate drives her out of her sphere.
So holds me Thoas, indeed a noble man, fast
In solemn, sacred, but slavish bonds.
O with shame I confess that with secret reluctance
I serve thee, Goddess, thee, my deliverer;
My life should freely have been dedicate to thee,
But I have always been hoping in thee, O Diana,
Who didst take in thy soft arms me, the rejected daughter
Of the greatest king; yes, daughter of Zeus,
I thought if thou gavest such anguish to him, the high hero,
The godlike Agamemnon;

The gates of heaven; where closer, day by day,
Brothers and sisters, leagued in pastime sweet,
Around each other twined the bonds of love.
I will not judge the counsel of the gods;
Yet truly, woman's lot doth merit pity.
Man rules alike at home and in the field,
Nor is in foreign climes without resource;
Possession glads him, conquest wreathes his brow,
And him an honorable death awaits.
How circumscribed is woman's destiny!
Obedience to a harsh, imperious lord,
Her duty, and her comfort; sad her fate,
Whom hostile fortune drives to lands remote!
Thus I, by noble Thoas, am detain'd,
Bound with a heavy, though a sacred chain.
Oh! with what shame, Diana, I confess
That with repugnance I perform these rites
For thee, divine protectress! unto whom
I would in freedom dedicate my life.
In thee, Diana, I have always hoped,
And still I hope in thee, who didst unfold
Within the holy shelter of thine arm
The outcast daughter of the mighty king.
Daughter of Jove! hast thou from ruin'd Troy
Led back in triumph to his native land
The mighty man, whom thou didst sore afflict,
His daughter's life in sacrifice demanding.—
Hast thou for him, the godlike Agamemnon,

Since he brought his dearest, a victim, to thy altar,
That, when he should return, crowned with glory, from Ilium,
At the same time thou shouldst give to his arms his other treasures,
His spouse, Electra, and the princely son,
Me also thou wouldst restore to mine own,
Saving a second time me, whom from death thou didst save,
From this worse death, the life of exile here.

These are the words and thoughts, but how give an idea of the sweet simplicity of expression in the original, where every word has the grace and softness of a flower petal.

She is interrupted by a messenger from the king, who prepares her for a visit from himself of a sort she has dreaded. Thoas, who has always loved her, now left childless by the calamities of war, can no longer resist his desire to reanimate by her presence his desert house. He begins by urging her to tell him the story of her race, which she does in a way that makes us feel as if that most famous tragedy had never before found a voice, so simple, so fresh in its naiveté is the recital.

Thoas urges his suit undismayed by the fate that hangs over the race of Tantalus.

* Was it the same Tantalus,
Whom Jupiter called to his council and banquets,
In whose talk so deeply experienced, full of various learning,
The Gods delighted as in the speech of oracles?

IPHIGENIA.

It is the same, but the Gods should not
Converse with men, as with their equals.

Who to thy altar led his darling child,
Preserved his wife, Electra, and his son,
His dearest treasures?—then at length restore
Thy suppliant also to her friends and home,
And save her, as thou once from death didst save,
So now, from living here, a second death.

* Is it that Tantalus, whom Jove himself
Drew to his council and his social board?
On whose experienced words, with wisdom fraught,
As on the language of an oracle,
E'en gods delighted hung?

The mortal race is much too weak
Not to turn giddy on unaccustomed heights.
He was not ignoble, neither a traitor,
But for a servant too great, and as a companion
Of the great Thunderer only a man. So was
His fault also that of a man, its penalty
Severe, and poets sing—Presumption
And faithlessness cast him down from the throne of Jove
Into the anguish of ancient Tartarus;
Ah, and all his race bore their hate.

THOAS.

Bore it the blame of the ancestor or its own?

IPHIGENIA.

Truly the vehement breast and powerful life of the Titan
Were the assured inheritance of son and grandchild,
But the Gods bound their brows with a brazen band,
Moderation, counsel, wisdom, and patience
Were hid from their wild, gloomy glance,
Each desire grew to fury,
And limitless ranged their passionate thoughts.

Iphigenia refuses with gentle firmness to give to gratitude what was undue. Thoas leaves her in anger, and, to make

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IPHIGENIA.

'T is even he;
But gods should not hold intercourse with men
As with themselves. Too weak the human race,
Not to grow dizzy on unwonted heights.
Ignoble was he not, and no betrayer;
To be the Thunderer's slave, he was too great:
To be his friend and comrade,—but a man.
His crime was human, and their doom severe;
For poets sing, that treachery and pride
Did from Jove's table hurl him headlong down,
To grovel in the depths of Tartarus.
Alas, and his whole race their hate pursues!

THOAS.

Bear they their own guilt, or their ancestors'?

IPHIGENIA.

The Titan's mighty breast and nervous frame
Was his descendant's certain heritage;
But round their brow Jove forged a band of brass.
Wisdom and patience, prudence and restraint,
He from their gloomy, fearful eye conceal'd;
In them each passion grew to savage rage,
And headlong rush'd unchecked.

her feel it, orders that the old, barbarous custom be renewed, and two strangers just arrived be immolated at Diana's altar.

Iphigenia, though distressed, is not shaken by this piece of tyranny. She trusts her heavenly protectress will find some way for her to save these unfortunates without violating her truth.

The strangers are Orestes and Pylades, sent thither by the oracle of Apollo, who bade them go to Tauris and bring back "The Sister," thus shall the heaven-ordained parricide of Orestes be expiated, and the Furies cease to pursue him.

The Sister they interpret to be Dian, Apollo's sister, but Iphigenia, sister to Orestes, is really meant.

The next act contains scenes of most delicate workmanship, first between the light-hearted Pylades, full of worldly resource and ready tenderness, and the suffering Orestes, of far nobler, indeed heroic nature, but less fit for the day, and more for the ages. In the first scene the characters of both are brought out with great skill, and the nature of the bond between "the butterfly and the dark flower" distinctly shown in few words.

The next scene is between Iphigenia and Pylades. Pylades, though he truly answers the questions of the priestess about the fate of Troy and the house of Agamemnon, does not hesitate to conceal from her who Orestes really is, and manufactures a tissue of useless falsehoods, with the same readiness that the wise Ulysses showed in exercising his ingenuity on similar occasions.

It is said, I know not how truly, that the modern Greeks are Ulyssean in this respect, never telling straight-forward truth, when deceit will answer the purpose; and if they tell any truth, practising the economy of the king of Ithaca, in always reserving a part for their own use. The character which this denotes is admirably hit off with few strokes in Pylades, the fair side of whom Iphigenia thus paints in a later scene.

* Bless, ye Gods, our Pylades,
And whatever he may undertake!
He is the arm of the youth in battle,
The light-giving eye of the aged man in the council.
For his soul is still; it preserves
The holy possession of Repose unexhausted,
And from its depths still reaches
Help and advice to those tossed to and fro.

Iphigenia leaves him in sudden agitation, when informed of the death of Agamemnon. Returning, she finds in his place Orestes, whom she had not before seen, and draws from him by her artless questions the sequel to this terrible drama wrought by his hand. After he has concluded his narrative in the deep tones of cold anguish, she cries,

† Immortals, you who your bright days through
Live in bliss throned on clouds ever renewed,
Only for this have you all these years
Kept me separate from men, and so near yourselves,
Given me the childlike employment to cherish the fires on your altars,
That my soul might, in like pious clearness,
Be ever aspiring towards your abodes,
That only later and deeper I might feel
The anguish and horror that have darkened my house.
O, Stranger,
Speak to me of the unhappy one, tell me of Orestes.

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* Oh bless, ye heavenly Powers, our Pylades,
And whatsoever he may undertake!
In combat his the vigorous arm of youth,
And in the council his the eye of age.
His soul is tranquil; in his inner mind
He guards a sacred, undisturb'd repose,
And from its silent depths a rich supply
Of aid and counsel draws for the distress'd.

† Immortal powers!
Whose pure and blest existence glides away
'Mid clouds for ever new, me have ye kept
So many years secluded from the world;
Retain'd me near yourselves, consign'd to me
The childlike task to feed the sacred fire,
And taught my spirit, like the hallow'd flame
With never-clouded brightness to aspire
To your pure mansions, but at length to feel
With keener woe the misery of my house.
Oh tell me of the poor unfortunate!
Speak of Orestes!

ORESTES.

O might I speak of his death!
Vehement flew up from the reeking blood
His Mother's Soul!
And called to the ancient daughters of Night,
Let not the matricide escape;
Pursue that man of crime. He is yours.
They obey, their hollow eyes
Darting about with vulture eagerness,
They stir themselves in their black dens,
From corners their companions
Doubt and Remorse steal out to join them,
Before them roll the mists of Acheron,
In its cloudy volumes rolls
The eternal contemplation of the irrevocable,
Bewildering round the head of the guilty.
Permitted now in their love of ruin they tread
The beautiful fields of a God-planted earth,
From which they had long been banished by an early curse.
Their swift feet follow the fugitive,
They pause never except to gather more power to dismay.

IPHIGENIA.

Unhappy man, thou art in like manner tortured,
And feelest truly what he, the poor fugitive, suffers!

ORESTES.

Would that he were dead!
Forth from his mother's blood her ghost arose,
And to the ancient daughters of the night
Cries,—"Let him not escape,—the matricide!
Pursue the victim, dedicate to you!"
They hear, and glare around with hollow eyes,
Like greedy eagles. In their murky dens
They stir themselves, and from the corners creep
Their comrades, dire Remorse and pallid Fear;
Before them fumes a mist of Acheron,
The never-dying memory of the past
In cloudy circles round his guilty brow
Perplexingly revolves. The grisly band,
Commission'd to destroy, now tread once more
The beauteous fields of earth, which God hath sown,
From which an ancient curse had banish'd them;
The fugitive their rapid feet pursue;
They only pause to frighten him anew.

IPHIGENIA.

Unhappy one; thy corresponding fate
Inspires a deeper sympathy with his.

ORESTES.

What sayest thou, what meanest of "like manner."

IPHIGENIA.

Thee, too, the weight of a fratricide crushes to earth; the tale
I had from thy younger brother.

ORESTES.

I cannot suffer that thou, great soul,
Shouldst be deceived by a false tale,
A web of lies let stranger weave for stranger,
Subtle with many thoughts, accustomed to craft,
Guarding his feet against a trap;
But between us
Be truth:——
I am Orestes;—and this guilty head
Bent downward to the grave seeks death,
In any shape were he welcome.
Whoever thou art, I wish thou mightst be saved,
Thou and my friend; for myself I wish it not.
Thou seem'st against thy will here to remain;
Invent a way to fly and leave me here, &c.

Like all pure productions of genius, this may be injured by the slightest change, and I dare not flatter myself that the English words give an idea of the heroic dignity expressed in the cadence of the original by the words

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ORESTES.

What say'st thou? why presume my fate like his?

IPHIGENIA.

A brother's murder weighs upon thy soul;
Thy younger brother told the mournful tale.

ORESTES.

I cannot suffer that thy noble soul
Should be deceived by error. Rich in guile,
And practised in deceit, one stranger may
A web of falsehood cunningly devise
To snare a stranger;—between us be truth.
I am Orestes! and this guilty head
Is stooping to the tomb, and covets death;
It will be welcome now in any shape.
Whoe'er thou art, for thee and for my friend
I wish deliverance;—I desire it not.
Thou seem'st to linger here against thy will;
Contrive some means of flight, and leave me here, &c.

"zwischen uns
Sei Wahrheit!
Ich bin Orest!"

where the Greek seems to fold his robe around him in the full strength of classic manhood, prepared for worst and best, not like a cold Stoic, but a hero, who can feel all, know all, and endure all. The name of two syllables in the German is much more forcible for the pause than the three syllable Orestes.

"between us
Be Truth!"

is fine to my ear, on which our word Truth also pauses with a large dignity.

The scenes go on more and more full of breathing beauty. The lovely joy of Iphigenia, the meditative softness with which the religiously educated mind perpetually draws the inference from the most agitating event, impress us more and more. At last the hour of trial comes. She is to keep off Thoas by a cunningly devised tale, while her brother and Pylades contrive their escape. Orestes has received to his heart the sister long lost, divinely restored, and in the embrace the curse falls from him, he is well, and Pylades more than happy. The ship waits to carry her to the palace home she is to free from a century's weight of pollution, and already the blue heavens of her adored Greece gleam before her fancy.

But oh! the step before all this can be obtained. To deceive Thoas, a savage and a tyrant indeed, but long her protector,—in his barbarous fashion her benefactor. How can she buy life, happiness, or even the safety of those dear ones at such a price!

* "Woe,
O Woe upon the lie. It frees not the breast,
Like the true-spoken word; it comforts not, but tortures

* "Detested falsehood! it doth not relieve
The breast like words of truth; it comforts not,

Him who devised it, and returns,
An arrow once let fly, God-repelled, back
„On the bosom of the Archer!"

* O must I then resign the silent hope
Which gave a beauty to my loneliness?
Must the curse dwell for ever, and our race
Never be raised to life by a new blessing?
All things decay, the fairest bliss is transient,
The powers most full of life grow faint at last,
And shall a curse alone boast an incessant life?
Then have I idly hoped that here kept pure,
So strangely severed from my kindred's lot,
I was designed to come at the right moment,
And with pure hand and heart to expiate
The many sins that spot my native home.

To lie, to steal the sacred image!
Olympians, let not these vulture talons
Seize on the tender breast. O save me,
And save your image in my soul.
Within my ears resounds the ancient lay,
I had forgotten it, and would so gladly;

But is a torment in the forger's heart;
And, like an arrow which a god directs,
Flies back and wounds the archer."

* May I no longer feed the silent hope
Which in my solitude I fondly cherish'd?
Shall the dire curse eternally endure?
And shall our fated race ne'er rise again
With blessings crown'd? All mortal things decay,—
The noblest powers, the purest joys of life
At length subside: then wherefore not the curse?
And have I vainly hoped that, guarded here,
Secluded from the fortunes of my race,
I, with pure heart and hands, some future day
Might cleanse the deep defilement of our house?
Scarce was my brother in my circling arms
From raging madness suddenly restored,
Scarce had the ship, long pray'd for, near'd the strand,
Once more to waft me to my native shores,
When unrelenting fate, with iron hand,
A double crime enjoins; commanding me
To steal the image, sacred and revered,
Confided to my care, and him deceive
To whom I owe my life and destiny.
Let not abhorrence spring within my heart!
Nor the old Titan's hate, toward you, ye Gods,
Infix its vulture talons in my breast!
Save me, and save your image in my soul!
An ancient song comes back upon mine ear—
I had forgotten it, and willingly—

The lay of the Parcæ, which they awful sang,
As Tantalus fell from his golden seat.
They suffered with the noble friend, wrathful
Was their heart, and fearful was the song.
In our childhood the nurse was wont to sing it
To me and the brother and sister. I marked it well.

Then follows the sublime song of the Parcæ, well known through translations.

But Iphigenia is not a victim of fate, for she listens stedfastly to the god in her breast. Her lips are incapable of subterfuge. She obeys her own heart, tells all to the king, calls up his better nature, wins, hallows, and purifies all around her, till the heaven-prepared way is cleared by the obedient child of heaven, and the great trespass of Tantalus cancelled by a woman's reliance on the voice of her innocent soul.

If it be not possible to enhance the beauty with which such ideal figures as the Iphigenia and the Antigone appeared to the Greek mind, yet Goethe has unfolded a part of the life of this being, unknown elsewhere in the records of literature. The character of the priestess, the full beauty of virgin womanhood, solitary but tender, wise and innocent, sensitive and self-collected, sweet as spring, dignified as becomes the chosen servant of God, each gesture and word of deep and delicate significance;—where else is such a picture to be found?

It was not the courtier, nor the man of the world, nor the connoisseur, nor the friend of Mephistopheles, nor Wilhelm the Master, nor Egmont the generous free liver, that saw Iphigenia in the world of spirits, but Goethe in his first-born glory, Goethe the poet, Goethe designed to be the keenest

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The Parcæ's song, which horridly they sang,
What time, hurl'd headlong from his golden seat,
Fell Tantalus. They with their noble friend
Keen anguish suffer'd; savage was their breast
And horrible their song. In days gone by,
When we were children, oft our ancient nurse
Would sing it to us, and I mark'd it well.

star in a new constellation. Let us not, in surveying his works and life, abide with him too much in the suburbs and outskirts of himself. Let us enter into his higher tendency, thank him for such angels as Iphigenia, whose simple truth mocks at all his wise "Beschränkungen," and hope the hour when, girt about with many such, he will confess, contrary to his opinion, given in his latest days, that it *is* well worth while to live seventy years, if only to find that they are nothing in the sight of God.

F.

[As many readers of these volumes may not be familiar with the drama of "Iphigenia," we here add Miss Swanwick's translation of the "Song of the Parcæ," mentioned in the preceding page.—ED.]

"The Gods' immortal race
Let man with fear survey!
In their eternal hands
They hold resistless sway,
According to their will
Dispensing good and ill.

Let him whom they exalt,
Fear them with twofold dread!
Above the cliffs and clouds
The golden board is spread.
Doth contest fierce ensue?
The guests are hurl'd below,
Dishonour'd and disgraced,
To depths of deepest woe,
Where long they vainly wait
A juster doom from fate.

But up among the clouds
They ever dwell on high,
While round the golden board
Their festive moments fly.

O'er mountain-tops they stride,
While from the depths below
The Titan's stifled breath
Fumes from those realms of woe;
Like incense to the skies,
Their anguish'd groans arise.

The Gods their eyes avert
From an ill-fated race,
Not wishing in the sons
The living form to trace
Of their once favour'd sire,
Who fell beneath their ire.

So sang the ancient Fates,
In gloomy caves profound,
The exiled Titan hears
That music's solemn sound,
Thinks of his sons with dread,
And bows his hoary head."

END OF VOL. I.

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